

CINEFANTASTIQUE

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TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II

THE ANIMATRONIC WONDERS, BEHIND THE SCENES

Raphael in red,
and Leonardo,
mean, green and
on the screen.

TERMINATOR 2

The effects heavy facing
Arnold's good guy cyborg

ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES

Kevin Costner on swinging into sword & sorcery action

Volume 21 Number 6

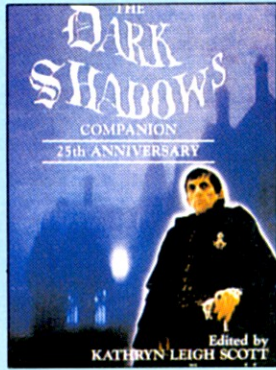


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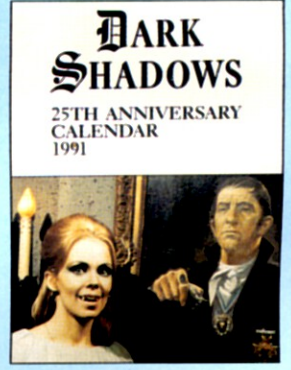
Vol. 21:3 Back Issue; Custom Reproduction
Back Issue: This issue takes you behind-the-scenes of the new Dark Shadows series. Meet the new cast, hear from series creator Dan Curtis, and review the history of the original show.
Custom Reproduction: A full-color 8 x 10 glossy photo reproduction of artist David Voigt's dazzling cover painting of Vol. 21:3 featuring the Vampire Barnabas—both today and yesterday.



The Dark Shadows Companion
 This 25th anniversary collection of photographs and behind-the-scenes stories, is edited by series star Kathryn Leigh Scott, with a forward by Jonathan Frid. Contributors include actors, writers, producers and directors of the original show. With rare color and b&w photos, synopsis of all 1,225 original episodes, and an introduction to the new NBC series. Hard & soft cover.



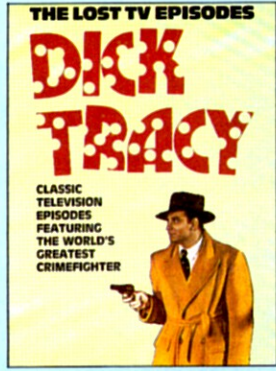
My Scrapbook Memories of Dark Shadows
 This collector's item is a must for all fans of the popular gothic horror of the late '60s-early '70s. Written by actress Kathryn Leigh Scott (who starred as "Maggie Evans" and "Josette Dupres"), this 152-page gem is packed with fascinating behind-the-scenes stories, 80 pages of photos, and a complete listing of every actor who ever appeared on the show. Soft cover only.



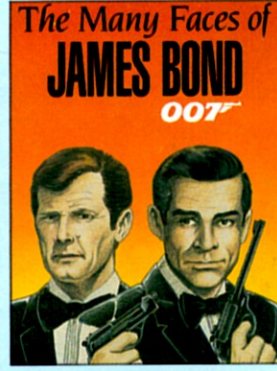
Dark Shadows Calendar
 This 1991 calendar commemorates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the original Dark Shadows show. Included are over fifteen color photos of the original cast members, along with photos of Quentin's Room, Collinwood and the Old House. This unique calendar, sure to become a collector's item, is a must for fans of both the old and the new Dark Shadows show. 8 1/2 x 11.



Reel Art
 Stephen Rebello (along with Richard Allen) surveys the field of film posters made during Hollywood's "golden age." Rebello's handsomely produced volume is clothbound, huge, (10 1/4 x 1), 336 pages, with 325 illustrations (250 in full color) and comes with a special bonus for our readers—an autographed bookplate (available in limited quantities—so order today!).



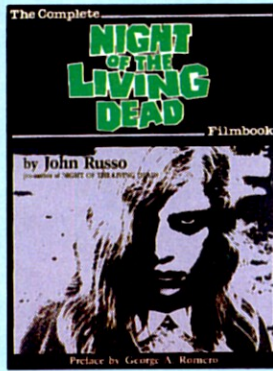
Dick Tracy Tapes
 These quality videos featuring comics hero Dick Tracy come directly from the distributor and are recorded in "Standard Play." *Dick Tracy vs. Cueball*; *Dick Tracy Meets Gruesome*; *Dick Tracy Documentary*; *Dick Tracy Detective*; *Dick Tracy's Dilemma*; *Lost TV Episodes Vol. 1*; *Lost TV Episodes Vol. 2*; *Lost TV Episodes Vol. 3*; and *Lost TV episodes Vol. 4*.



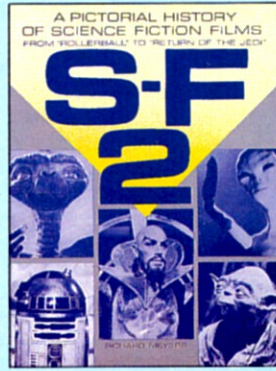
Bond Tapes
 These three videos are fondly devoted to the screen's most-loved secret agent—007. 1) *Bond At The Movies*—a compilation of trailers with Sean Connery and Roger Moore; 2) *Casino Royale* is a classic TV production with Barry Nelson as Bond; and 3) *The Many Faces of Bond* is a tribute featuring all six actors with film clips and rare documentary footage.



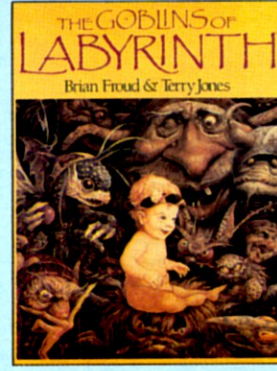
Trailers
 Each of the following tapes (preview trailers) runs approximately one hour and features thematic groupings from genre films of the past. *Horror/SF I*, *Horror/SF II*, *Horror/SF III*, *Horror/SF IV (Hammer Horrors)*, *Horror/SF V (Horrible Honeys)*, *Horror/SF VI (Super Giants)*, *Hitchcock Collection*, and *American International Pictures (AIP)*.



Night of the Living Dead Filmbook
 By John Russo, author of the movie that gave zombies a new life tells all the behind-the-scenes details of its filming. Includes humorous anecdotes, rare photos and an introduction by director George Romero. Film fans and budding filmmakers will enjoy this comprehensive, insightful look into the creation of one of the best horror films ever made. Paper; 104 pages.



S-F 2
 A unique approach to the history of science fiction films "says it all with pictures." This comprehensive pictorial history follow-up takes you from *ROLLERBALL* to *RETURN OF THE JEDI*, from massive productions to modest. Each film has plot summaries, production stories and behind-the-scenes information, with over 300 photographs. Cloth, 256 pages.



The Goblins of Labyrinth
 The malevolent Goblins that populated Jim Henson's films are brought to life through the imaginative drawings of Brian Froud, the artist who teamed up with Henson as the conceptual designer of the fantasy film *LABYRINTH*, as well as Henson's *THE DARK CRYSTAL*, with text provided by Terry Jones. Paper; 137 pages. Only nine remaining.



Superman Portfolio
 Artist Jim Deitz, who specializes in illustration for films has captured the impact of the motion picture *SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE* into a remarkable series of original paintings commissioned exclusively for this portfolio. Twelve scenes from the movie are portrayed in these colorful, suitable-for-framing prints, 10 1/2 x 13 1/2. Only eleven remaining.

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The magazine with a "Sense of Wonder."

JUNE, 1991

Turtlemania is upon us once again! Now that **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II** has opened nationwide, the question of whether they'll repeat last year's surprise success at the boxoffice has been answered. But regardless of whether the Turtles turn out to be another merchandising flash in the pan or attain the permanence of a cultural icon, the animatronic ingenuity and puppeteering creativity that brings them to life deserves accolades.

This issue's cover story on the making of **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II** focuses on the work of the Jim Henson Creature Shop, recognizing the breakthrough in animatronic effects technology that contributed to the success of the original film and its sequel. Writer Gary L. Wood provides a behind-the-scenes look at the workings of the Creature Shop, reporting as an observer during filming on the set at Carolco Studios in Wilmington, North Carolina. Wood, a former naval electronics expert, demystifies the complex radio control technology that brings the Turtles to life, and profiles the puppeteers at the controls and the performers laboring inside the foam rubber. What emerges is a picture of the mammoth logistical undertaking involved in giving the Turtles fantasy the kind of motion picture realism that suspends an audience's disbelief. That achievement is a tribute to the late Jim Henson, the Creature Shop's mentor, the legacy of his life's work, expanding the horizons of puppeteering artistry.

Also previewed this issue are two of the most eagerly anticipated fantasy and science fiction films set to open at theatres this summer. Alan Jones files a report from London on the set of **ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES**. Star Kevin Costner talks about swinging into sword and sorcery action in the title role, and director Kevin Reynolds reveals some surprising horror elements that are being added to the myth. And Sheldon Teitelbaum provides a scoop from Hollywood on director James Cameron's **TERMINATOR 2**, reportedly seriously overbudget, with Arnold Schwarzenegger now cast as a good-guy killer robot. *Frederick S. Clarke*



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THE FISHER KING

Terry Gilliam directs Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges in a mythic, modern fable.

By Dan Persons

An image to remember: Terry Gilliam having breakfast in the staid, luxuriously appointed dining room of New York's Stanhope Hotel. The director (and Monty Python alumnus) was easy to spot, sitting contentedly in a corner, dressed in a leather jacket and tieless, white shirt. The jacket won Gilliam a few glances askance and an offer from the hostess to check the garment (which the director politely declined). We were fortunate, maybe, that no one recognized Gilliam as the man who had, in one film, taken a not-dissimilar dining room, run it through with the ugliest ducts available, and then, as a final design trope, exploded a terrorist bomb in one corner. They still served us coffee.

Actually, after the heartaches and anger surrounding both *BRAZIL* (1985) and *THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN* (1989), Gilliam admitted that his new project, the just-completed and more modestly budgeted (\$22 million) *THE FISHER KING*, was a deliberate and career-vital step back from his previous, high-flown proclivities.

The fire-breathing Red Knight astride his steed, the recurring vision of evil stalking Parry in New York.



Gilliam in Central Park, directing Williams as Parry, a superbum who is part Robin Hood, part King Arthur, in a quirky fantasy Columbia is set to open in May.

Columbia opens the film in May. "It's not as fantastic as my other things have been," he said. "That intrigued me a lot, the idea of not having to rely on extraordinary, fantastical elements to make similar statements. It's also a chance to be just a bit middle-aged. It's about real relationships and people coming together. I felt it was about time to start doing that, instead of running around with little kids all the time or men who spend their time in dreams and fantasizing about women.

"There are all sorts of ways of describing [THE FISHER KING], all of them pretty useless. You could say it's about redemption, or you could say it's about a guy getting a date for a friend of his so he doesn't feel so bad about things. It's really about a search for the Holy Grail in the twentieth century in New York—a metaphorical search."

From quest, to redemption, to a fun night out on the town—that, to say the least, covers a lot of ground. What *THE FISHER KING* is actually about is the fall from grace of one Jack Lucas (Jeff Bridges), a Howard Stern-like shock-comedy D.J., whose "kill the yuppie scum" patter inspires an impressionable fan to turn a shotgun on the clientele of an

upper East Side bar. Reduced to working in a downtown video shop—the kind that does its biggest business in "special interest" tapes tucked away in a back room—Jack's self-pitying worldview is turned around when he is saved from a mugging by a charismatic "superbum" named Parry (Robin Williams). Part Robin Hood, part King Arthur, Parry takes Jack under his wing, revealing to the former D.J. a Manhattan altered and elevated by the derelict's views of chivalry and courage.

More down-to-earth comedy than anything else, *THE FISHER KING* generates most of its fantasy both through Parry's

visions of New York as a kind of enchanted kingdom, and through the story's parallels to the Arthurian legend of the Fisher King, which tells of a maimed leader whose wounds are healed by the innocence of "a perfect fool." (The title itself is a willful mistranslation of the French phrase for "The King of Sinners.") What overt fantasy elements there are come mostly as the result of Parry's enhanced imagination: a scene where a throng of commuters in Grand Central Station swing into a graceful waltz or the repeated manifestations of Parry's image of pure evil, the Red Knight.

For Gilliam, *THE FISHER KING* actually represents a change on several counts: first film shot in America—with six weeks on-location work in New York, followed by six more weeks of interiors in L.A.—first to be scripted by another writer (Richard LaGravenese, in his feature film debut). It is also, Gilliam claimed, his first to go into production without the benefit of storyboarding. "I refused to do it. I thought, 'Okay, I'll just try to work with what we've got.' That was nice for a change. It was really, in a strange way, a test for me to see if I could actually do it without all my crutches.

"Because this film is, in a sense, a fairy

tale, I decided to shoot it like you would a fairy tale. The myth of the Fisher King is that he's dying and his kingdom is barren and everything's dying with him—so: New York. It's all stone, it's all brutal buildings, there are no living things like trees and birds and all that. I tried to isolate all of that. I put Jack [Bridges], since he's really the Fisher King, up in the most sheer, most minimalistic, most severe, cold building I could find. And then Parry is living underground, he's almost like Alberich from *The Ring of the Nibelung*."

THE FISHER KING is Gilliam's second outing with Robin Williams, following the actor/comedian's uncredited appearance as King of the Moon in THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN. As far as performing styles were concerned, Gilliam said there was never any trouble striking a balance between Bridges, whose Jack is the film's focus character, and Williams. "Robin was the first person involved in the film," said Gilliam. "I wanted to find an actor to work opposite him that would really ground him, that would really hold him down—because Robin and I both suffer from the same tendency to leap off into madness. And Jeff is such a solid, grounded actor, he really pulled both Robin and me right back to earth. They worked as a wonderful double act. They both learned from each other. I remember one scene Robin was uncomfortable with, and Jeff just grabbed him and said, 'Here, let me give you a hug,' and Robin was just . . . away. He was in love with Jeff, and that's what the scene demanded."

As for the people behind the camera, Gilliam—who admitted that he had once sworn never to work with an American crew—said that the experience wasn't the ordeal he had anticipated. "I think good crews are good crews, anywhere. That's what's nice about film. The only thing I found weird was that the crews here were a bit more reticent about joining in and having opinions. I don't know if it's the way American directors work, that they're much more totalitarian in their approach—more martinet—but it just took a while for me to get people to realize that they could react, that I wanted their opinions, I



Bridges as Jack, a self-pitying former shock D.J., who, taken under Parry's wing, discovers a city altered and elevated by the derelict's views on chivalry and courage.

“There are all sorts of ways of describing it,” said Gilliam, “all of them pretty useless. It’s really about the metaphorical search for the Holy Grail in present day New York.”

wanted to know what they were thinking. On a certain level, there was a tendency to say, 'Just tell me where to point the gun, don't ask me to think about why I'm pointing it.' I find British crews are much quicker to say, 'Why?' or 'Do you really need that?' They question their orders, basically." Gilliam shrugged and laughed. "Good soldiers, here."

Still, the director found both cast and crew willing to rise to the occasion when the situation demanded it, in one case, on a night when rain forced the cancellation of a scheduled Central Park shoot and the substitution of a scene set in a Chinese restaurant. "There'd been no preparation," said Gilliam, "and it was just great to do this big scene—just move in there,

set up all the bits and pieces that we had to add, and get the actors to work. We ad-libbed the whole scene. [Before we'd finished] we decided to do an end-shot—just a pull-back, over the tops of these tables—and of course we hadn't hired a crane or any of the equipment you need to do such a shot. The crew assembled something with old two-by-fours and tape, and made this *huge*, wooden crane. *Everybody* was working—it was an amazing effort. It was wonderful. I'd like to be able to do a lot more of that in the course of a film. I'm too frightened to."

To prepare for its May opening, Columbia organized several preview screenings of THE FISHER KING. The only change required as a result, said Gilliam, was a bit of re-editing to give audiences more time to laugh. Noted Gilliam about the studio comment card preview process, "What's amazing is how diligently people will do it. Here's this screening where they've all been laughing and applauding and crying . . . and then it's heads down and it's test time and they're really dutiful, little citizens. And I *hate* that. I wish they'd just tear the cards up!"

About the necessity for such screenings, Gilliam held that he still wasn't comfortable with what most studios consider standard operating procedure. "When we're cutting the film in London, I'm screening it every week—we just get people in: friends, friends of friends . . . I don't care, just people. It's very informal. I pretty much know how it's playing by the time I bring it to the States. The studio never likes to hear this, because they've got a major system sorted out that is supposed to provide *the truth*."

Gilliam has already started work on his next project: a co-scripting effort with Richard LaGravenese titled THE DEFECTIVE DETECTIVE. Said Gilliam, the film will be "TIME BANDITS meets BRAZIL. It's about a man coming apart in middle age—nothing to do with me, of course. I'm trying to mix two worlds—the world of the adult and the world of the child—in a fun way, having the two things in competition." He laughed. "It's back to the old stuff, but with Richard, the characters will be much more developed." □

Suburban COMMANDO

Wrestler Hulk Hogan plays space straight man to Earth nerd Christopher Lloyd.

By *Tim Vandehey*

Take one look at boxoffice figures for the films of Stallone, Schwarzenegger and Chuck Norris and it's not hard to see why the thought of a successful, bigger-than-life action film hero makes a producer's mouth water. Now New Line Cinema throws wrestling star Hulk Hogan into the fray with *SUBURBAN COMMANDO*, slated for release May 10. Hogan plays Shep Ramsey, an intergalactic warrior and all-around good guy who crashes his spaceship in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley while on the way to a vacation.

Described as an "action-adventure-comedy," the film is directed by Burt Kennedy, best known for Westerns like *HOW THE WEST WAS WON* and *SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHERIFF*. "It won't play as science fiction," said Kennedy. "There are only seven minutes in space, and the rest is in Reseda, California." Christopher Lloyd and Shelley Duvall star as the suburbanites who rent a room to the stranded Hogan as he is pursued by intergalactic hit-men led by William Ball as the mutating General Suitor.

"Calling it a comic book is underselling it," said visual effects coordinator Jeff Okun, who worked on *DIE HARD 2*. Okun is delivering more than 200 effects shots for *SUBURBAN COMMANDO* on less than five percent of his *DIE*



Lloyd is the comedian as the titular *SUBURBAN COMMANDO* (right), reluctantly receiving instruction from Hogan as intergalactic soldier of fortune Heck Ramsey.

HARD 2 budget. Okun's cost-cutting measures have included producing elaborate pull-back optical shots without the use of motion control; taping a photo of a hole onto a tree trunk to simulate the effect of a laser; and using spacecraft models built for other films, but never used—the ships appearing in an opening attack sequence were originally built for *CAPTAIN EO*.

"The challenge was to not lessen the quality or number of effects shots," said Okun. "Theoretically, we have pre-planned and visualized everything." Despite the low-budget constraints, Okun is proud of the work, especially the "space tick," the insect-like ship of General Suitor, which takes off at the end of the film, folding up its legs as it rises over color plates of downtown Los Angeles.

The film's most spectacular effect is the mutation of Suitor at the film's climax, devised by makeup expert Steve Johnson (*THE ABYSS*). Ball plays Suitor as humanoid for most of the film, but when he faces off with Ramsey before the final battle, the General transforms into his true form: a tentacled, slimy, multi-horned, seven-foot gargoyle. Johnson directed the building of what he called "a great creature suit" without a mechanical head or prosthetics due to budget limitations.

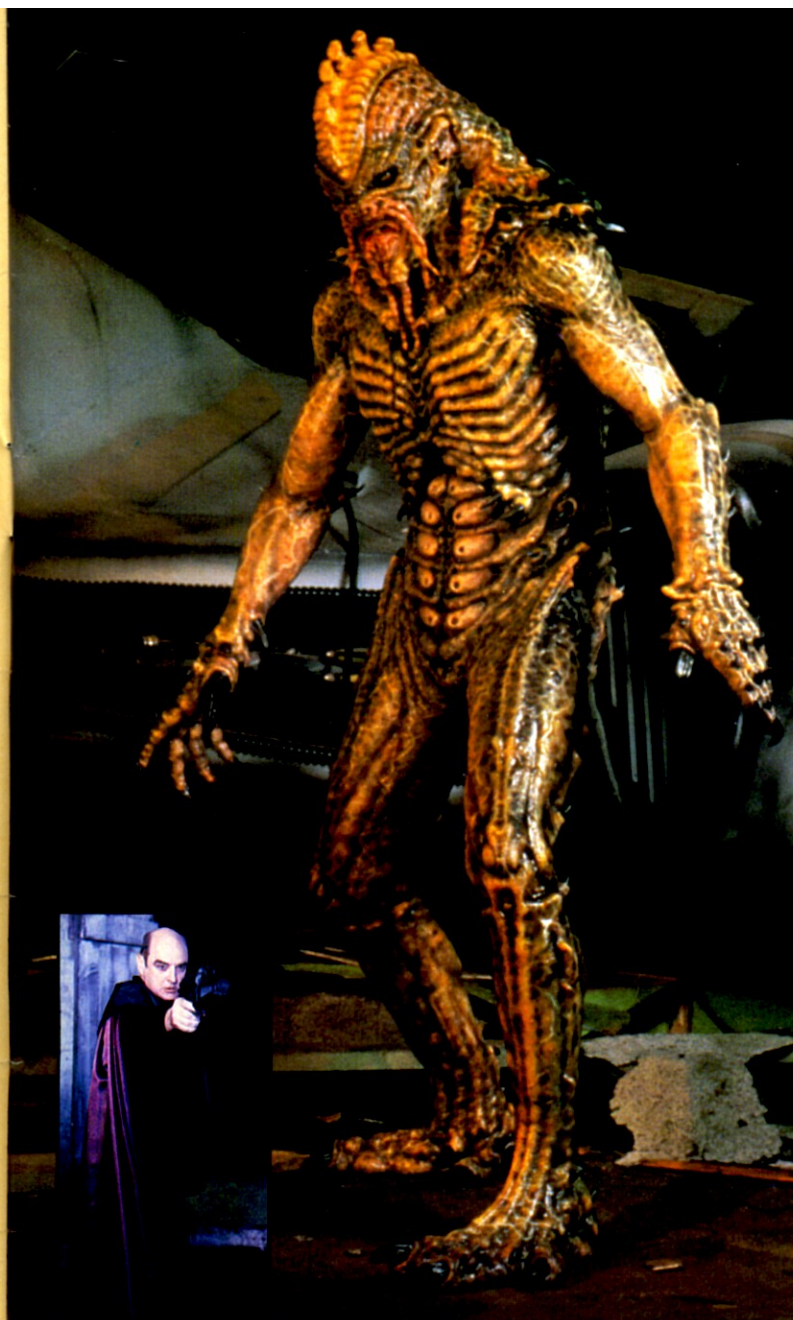
Johnson noted the transformation is handled mostly with cutaways and reaction shots from Hogan and Lloyd. "I could have done something elaborate, like *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*, but it wouldn't have been anything people hadn't seen before," he said. Johnson is particularly proud of a

closeup metamorphosis shot where Suitor's hand changes from human to inhuman. "That was a favorite idea I've been nurturing for a couple of years."

But *SUBURBAN COMMANDO* won't succeed or fail on its special effects wizardry. At its core, it's less science fiction than weird comedy along the lines of *EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY*. The film's zany feel, according to Ball, comes from a "fun" script written by Frank Cappello. "It's not corny," said Ball, a Tony Award-winning Broadway actor who founded the American Conservatory Theatre. "It's a prototype, full of lines like 'Ah, Shep Ramsey, at last we meet.' It's got some all-time great lines."

Ball's General Suitor is a sort of intergalactic corporate raider who goes around taking over planets which aren't properly managing their affairs. Ball described Suitor as a "plain dealing villain," and loves him that way. "This is the kind of acting you wanted to do when you were a kid," said Ball, a serious actor who has done his share of Shakespeare. "Acting Shakespeare is sort of like playing Bach; you have to play all the right notes. But this is playing like you used to do around the back of the house, swooping around with a cape on."

At the heart of *SUBURBAN COMMANDO*, though, are Hogan and Lloyd, a Punch and Judy act. Lloyd, whose querulous, meek architect



General Sutor, the interstellar hit man out to get Ramsey, mutates into a full body monster suit designed by Steve Johnson. Inset: William Ball plays Sutor in human guise.

gains guts and glory by helping Ramsey rid the Earth of the alien party crashers, is a marvelous comic actor capable of a range of befuddling expressions that can generate laughter without a word. According to Hogan, Lloyd is the funny man of their semi-dynamic duo.

"I play the role perfectly straight," said Hogan, still garbed in the huge boots that make up part of his elaborate power suit costume. "The script was originally written for Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito, so when they cast me, they were still looking for big guy, little guy. All of a sudden we said, 'How

about straight guy, funny guy?' so now I'm the straight guy, and Chris is the comedian."

Standing 6'7" on the set, at 300 pounds, Hogan can best be described as a "presence." But it's not just because of his size that Hogan dominates the peripheral vision. Behind his familiar Saturday morning face lies a keen mind which has propelled Hogan, like Schwarzenegger, beyond the narrow limits set by his muscles. He has parlayed his skills into international fame and wealth, and has, largely by the force of his personality, made the World Wrestling Federation grow from an obscure, late night target of ridicule into a mega-

hit in all corners of the world.

Hogan, who had a role in *ROCKY III* and starred in New Line's wrestling film *NO HOLDS BARRED*, finds *SUBURBAN COMMANDO* a new challenge. "I consider myself more of a performer," said Hogan, used to playing before a screaming, live audience every week. "I really have to tone myself down a lot for this. I have to avoid that Hulk Hogan look. There's a scene where the bounty hunters are getting ready to rip Christopher Lloyd apart. Well, Hulk Hogan would have reacted with this huge, open-eyed look that 30,000 people could see from the top row. Instead, I get this dead serious look. Hulk Hogan doesn't work, here. If I did it like Hulk, I'd steal every scene, or ruin every scene."

Hogan's experience as the WWF's king of mayhem did come in handy, though, in the film's fight scenes. Hogan impressed many film veterans by stepping in and showing actors and stuntmen how to react to certain punches for better effect, or how to take a certain fall. And, of course, the Hulk did most of his own stunts. But Hogan said his biggest concern was not the physical side of filmmaking, but the idea that they wanted to make a serious picture at first. "The thing started as *URBAN COMMANDO*, but everybody thought that sounded too much like Schwarzenegger," he said. "Then somebody suggested changing it to *SUBURBAN COMMANDO*, and putting the comedy into it. I'll



Hogan as Ramsey in full space gear.

tell you, it took a million pounds off my shoulders when we made it into an action-adventure-comedy."

Hogan said he decries excessive film violence and wants *SUBURBAN COMMANDO* to be suitable for his Saturday morning following. "Movies like *TOTAL RECALL* are pretty strong for kids," said Hogan, who has two children. "Kids are curious, and they can get in four or five years under the age set down by the rating. What we are doing here is controlled violence. I'm not going to be like Rambo, with a bandolier and two guns and a pool of blood at my feet. I think you can make a good action-adventure without the blood and guts." □

Lloyd bids goodbye to Hogan as family members Shelley Duvall, Michael Faustino and Laura Mooney look on, ET paths with the action quotient of TV wrestling.



ROBIN HOOD

PRINCE OF THIEVES

The legend, updated with horror and the flair of Indiana Jones.

By Alan Jones

An oft-filmed legend gets the INDIANA JONES treatment, and a \$40 million budget to match, in the Morgan Creek production **ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES**. Directed by Kevin Reynolds, a Steven Spielberg protege yet to crack the big time, the on-going Crusade of Sherwood Forest's most famous inhabitant reaches screens in June from Warner Bros. The medieval swashbuckler stars heart-throb Kevin Costner, fresh from his **DANCES WITH WOLVES** directorial triumph, as Robin of Locksley with ace **DIE HARD** villain Alan Rickman playing his devil worshipping nemesis, the Sheriff of Nottingham. Rebel **HEATHERS** star Christian Slater is Will Scarlet and, dried off after diving into **THE ABYSS**, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is Maid Marian—a last-minute replacement for Robin Wright (**THE PRINCESS BRIDE**), who bowed out after learning she was pregnant by Sean Penn. Fleshing out the usual assortment of Merrie Men is **DRIVING MISS DAISY** Oscar-nom-



Kevin Costner stars as Robin of Locksley.

inated Morgan Freeman as Azeem, a Moor who helps Robin escape from a Moroccan dungeon to become his blood brother. And portraying Mortiana, the Sheriff's evil albino soothsayer, is Shakespearean actress Geraldine McEwan.

The latter two characters were of vast importance to co-writer John Watson. "There was no point retelling the myth unless it had a different, fresh and novel approach," said

Watson who, with Pen Densham and Richard B. Lewis, is a partner in Trilogy Entertainment, the film's co-producer with Morgan Creek. Trilogy packaged Stan Winston's unreleased fantasy **UPWORLD** and Densham's horrific **THE KISS**. **ROBIN HOOD** is the biggest project they've ever undertaken. Watson and Densham were paid a reported \$1.2 million-plus for their redefinition of the Sherwood saga, one Watson said, "took ages figuring out how to find ways to make sure '90s audiences would respond." Watson credited Densham, who was raised in Britain, with the idea of doing a new version. "People are looking for a new kind of hero," said Watson. "They've had enough of cops, robots and space."

The new film's approach to the legend can be summed up by Watson and Densham's description of the Merrie Men as medieval Hell's Angels. Add to that Reynolds' observation that "Slater plays a 12th Century James Dean" (complete with Rocker quiff), the overall opinion that Marian is a 12th Century feminist, and the fact that the film's humor is

of a very contemporary nature. In the words of Nick Brimble, **FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND**'s monster-turned-Little John, "This isn't green tights time. We don't pose around with longbows. It's rough, rugged fantasy fun geared around non-stop action." Added Watson, "Another major difference is the Sheriff. He's evil personified. With King Richard absent, England has reverted to paganism and human sacrifice. The Good/Christianity vs. Evil/Darkside is even more potent."

Although the horror isn't heavily accented or too graphic, that element is what attracted Reynolds to the project. "There's scope for horror and there are dark forces to contend with," said Reynolds, a self-confessed Anglophile. "I had many discussions with the writers who were receptive to the changes I wanted. I found the sub-plot between the Sheriff and Mortiana most intriguing and wanted to develop this dynamic further." Reynolds was the popular choice of both Morgan Creek and Trilogy, on the strength of the humorous character studies of his Spielberg-produced **FANDANGO**, and the stylish visuals of his war epic **THE BEAST**.

"I'm well aware of the fine line I'm skirting between car-



Returning home from the Crusades.

U P D A T I N G S H E R W O O D

“There was no point retelling the myth unless it had a different, fresh and novel approach to make sure '90s audiences would respond. They've had enough of cops, robots and space.”



Costner at Hadrian's Wall with Morgan Freeman as Azeem, a Saracen sidekick.

toon romp and gritty drama,” said Reynolds. “If it’s too serious, audiences will get bored. If it’s too outlandish, I’ll lose them completely. I’m trying to take the larger-than-life aspect as far as I can go while staying within the limits of believability. If there truly are only seven original stories in this world, then *Robin Hood* is one of them. But the contemporary feel makes the well-recorded events less archaic as I’m convinced people spoke then very much as we do now rather than in poetic prose.”

Reynolds said he refused to watch any of the previous ROBIN HOOD movies. “Classic movies bore me,” he said. “They’re so dated and I didn’t want to be disappointed.” He wouldn’t have had time, any-

way. Reynolds was signed just twelve weeks prior to the film’s September 6, 1990 start date. “Morgan Creek was in tight competition at the time with two other rival ROBIN HOODs,” said Reynolds. “It has been a tough shoot as a result of working six days flat out for seven months. I couldn’t storyboard everything as closely as I wanted and I’ve winged it a lot more than I would have liked. But it was either that or not do it at all. I knew it would be rough, so I clung to some early advice Spielberg gave me, ‘Just survive it.’ I can’t tell you how much I’ve appreciated those words since.”

One of Reynolds’ ROBIN HOOD rivals is slated to beat his film to market. 20th Century Fox’s version, more faith-

Costner and Christian Slater as balladeer Will Scarlet, 12th Century *Hell's Angels*.



ful to the legend, will be telecast as a TV movie on the Fox network in May. Director John Irvin replaced John McTierman, and Patrick Bergin replaced Mel Gibson as Robin when the Fox project got downgraded to TV status. The film, which also stars Uma Thurman, Jurgen Prochnow and Jeroen Krabbe, will open theatrically in foreign markets.

Everyone agrees, Reynolds included, that Costner is *the* perfect Robin Hood. The two Kevins have been close friends for years: FANDANGO gave Costner his first leading part and Reynolds got a special thank you credit in *DANCES WITH WOLVES*. “Kevin wasn’t signed when I came on board, but fortunately he was interested,” said Reynolds. “Perhaps our past relationship made the choice easier but he’s physically adept and that’s what the role needed. During the first week of shooting he was goofing off between takes when suddenly he took out an arrow, turned around, aimed his bow and hit a stuffed rabbit dead center. Everyone stopped in their tracks and you could tell they were all thinking, ‘Wow, that’s Robin!’”

Costner took time off escaping the Sheriff’s clutches on an impressive medieval town square set built on the Sheperton studio backlot, to explain why he chose to follow in the footsteps of Douglas Fairbanks and Errol Flynn. “What I saw in this script was a big sense of adventure as different to every previous ROBIN HOOD as could be, considering the tired story,” said Costner. “The fresh originality in the writing helps the genre take a major leap. I’m not just the Action Man imposing his own personality on the movie. I fell in line with the writing, which suggests Robin was the first terrorist. I’m also attempting

an English accent because I didn’t want this to turn into a United Nations of dialects. It’s a gamble, and time will tell if it pays off. But I can only do what feels right. You don’t get put in prison for following your heart. I don’t understand the fear in Hollywood over that.”

Co-workers called Costner a perfectionist, but he doesn’t agree. “What I am is focused,” he said. “I don’t mess around and I pay attention to what I’m doing. Especially here as I’m doing my own stunts, running over the backs of four horses, swinging from chandeliers, swordfighting and flying through trees on ropes. That’s the major difference with our ROBIN HOOD. The Sherwood Forest camp is built high in the trees giving it a SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON appeal. I’m bringing a sense of honor to the part because if I’m honorable in what I do it will translate through the screen.”

The film’s major departure from the legend is the introduc-

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Costner at Alnwick, a 13th century Northumberland town serving as the home of Maid Marian, Robin’s love.



Makeup Switch

Blake Edwards left the devil's best scene on the cutting room floor.

By Dan Scapperotti

Blake Edwards, the man who gave the world Inspector Clouseau in the successful PINK PANTHER comedies, directed SWITCH for Warner Bros, a comedy-fantasy set to open April 19th. Steve Brooks plays an unrepentant male chauvinist bumped off by vengeful ex-girlfriend JoBeth

Williams, who finds himself in Purgatory, confronted by the Devil and God. Brooks gets sent back to Earth in the form of Ellen Barkin, the gender "switch" of the title.

Edwards' script included a comedy gag sequence where the Devil was to appear in full makeup, an effect dropped from the final film. Mike Smithson, hired to create the unused demon makeup, had done sculpting and design work on several genre films including THE FLY, GHOST-BUSTERS II and THE BLOB. "Blake really wanted a kind of cliché demon," said Smithson. "It started out as a traditional red devil with the mustache and the pitchfork."

In the cut sequence, Barkin presses up on an elevator only to have it descend, the walls smoking, to open up on a Hellish landscape complete with the Devil (Bruce Payne). "The devil has this really cheapo demon mask on," said Smith-



Bruce Payne in the devil makeup by Mike Smithson, dropped from director Blake Edwards' SWITCH. Inset: The original mask-behind-a-mask concept.



son, "like a Vac-u-form Halloween mask. He walks into the elevator and he pulls the mask off and the prosthetics underneath are almost exactly the same as the mask, only looking real."

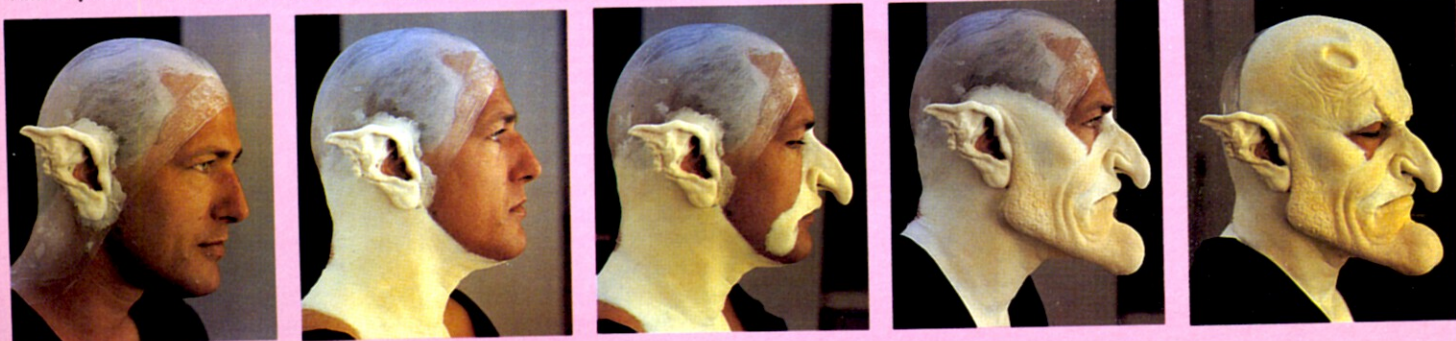
Smithson designed, sculpted and applied the demon makeup, and the Vac-u-form mask. "It actually changed quite a bit from the original mock-up to what I finally brought on-set," said Smithson. The makeup took four and a half hours to apply, consisting of an eight-piece overlapping appliance with rigid foam horns. Chris Goehle did the mold work for Smithson and Eric Jenson ran the foam

latex. They shot Payne in front of a blue screen at the Culver Studios and planned to matte in the Hades landscape background later.

"I had to go on-set while Edwards was shooting with Ellen Barkin," said Smithson. "It was kind of a makeup test on the run. I changed the color of the Devil to a marbled human paint scheme and Blake seemed to really like that, so that was how it was filmed."

Smithson, however, saw his three months of work go down the drain when Edwards decided to drop the elevator gag after it was in the can. "It was a real throwaway gag," said the disappointed makeup artist. □

Above: Makeup designer Smithson puts finishing touches on Payne. Below: Payne undergoes application of the foam rubber prosthetics for the missing throw-away gag. Final steps not shown include painting, blending the appliances to exposed skin with makeup, and the addition of hair pieces and the devil's distinctive rigid rubber horns.



TERMINATOR 2

Michael Biehn is back in a cameo-sized role now that Schwarzenegger's the hero.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Michael Biehn did not survive the mayhem of director James Cameron's 1984 film, *THE TERMINATOR*. Yet the 33-year-old actor will be appearing—albeit extremely briefly—in Cameron's upcoming sequel, *TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY*, set for release July 4 from Tri-Star. Biehn revealed he will reprise his role as a far-future freedom fighter as a cameo. How big a part is it?

"Let's put it this way," said Biehn. "It's a six-month shoot, and my sequence required two days of work."

Biehn is not complaining about his limited involvement in the production but is less than pleased. With Arnold Schwarzenegger cast in the sequel as a heroic Terminator fighting to save mankind, there was no need to bring back Biehn's resourceful commando, the hero of the original. Biehn said he learned of the reduced role he would play in the sequel while filming *THE ABYSS* with Cameron.

"Jim [Cameron] and I had talked about bringing my character back," recalled Biehn, who stars in MGM/UA's *NAMELESS*, to open in May. "People said, 'Well, it's a time travel piece, sure you can work him back in.' But we couldn't figure out a way to do it intelligently. Believe me, we tried. You'd either have to go far into the past or far into the future to work it out, and neither way made any sense."

Linda Hamilton returns in *TERMINATOR 2* in the role of Sarah Connor, raising



James Cameron directs Michael Biehn (r) as Kyle Reese, the commando from the future who saved Linda Hamilton in the original, now relegated to bit part status.

Biehn's son John, who will ultimately defeat the machines oppressing mankind that sent Schwarzenegger back in the original to kill her. Twelve-year-old Edward Furlong plays Hamilton's son, a tough, rebellious kid with a juvenile police record, older and wiser than his years.

"One of the things that I liked about *THE TERMINATOR* is that it was lean," said Biehn. "It had a heart—this great relationship between me and Linda [Hamilton]. Of course, I've been supplanted—the movie is about Arnold [Schwarzenegger's] relationship with Hamilton's boy. This time he's a good Arnold—his role is better."

Some sources suggest Schwarzenegger's switch from villain to hero was at the actor's request. *TERMINATOR 2* unit publicist Steve Newman declined to set up interviews or provide information about the secretive pro-

duction. It's interesting to note, however, that Cameron originally sought to cast Schwarzenegger in the heroic Biehn role of the original, with Jurgen Prochnow to have played a more normal appearing, less protean Terminator. That is now the basic scenario of the sequel, as scripted by Cameron with William Wisher.

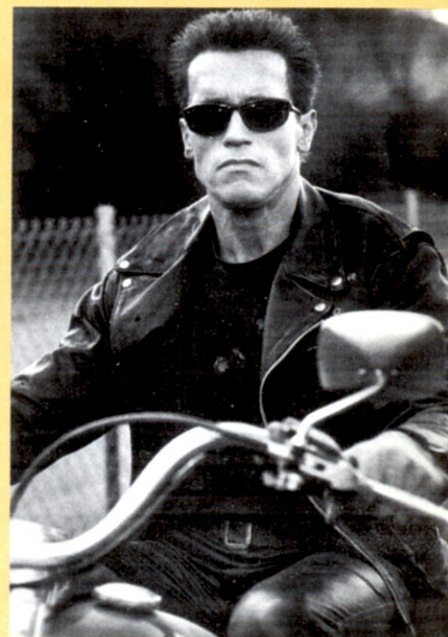
Opposing Schwarzenegger is Robert Patrick as Key 1000, a cyborg from the future with the stature of a David Bowie, armed with fantastic powers to seek out and destroy Hamilton and her son. The film's new killer cyborg is being rendered as an eye-opening special effect by ILM using the kind of Computer Graphics Imaging technology employed on the amazing water tentacle of Cameron's *THE ABYSS*. Key 1000's superior advanced nano-technology allows the cyborg to control its own morphology on a cellular, molecular or even atomic level. CGI effects by

ILM will depict Key 1000 melting down into a puddle to go under a door to pursue its quarry. In one scene the cyborg has a pipe slammed into its chest, which it pulls out effortlessly, closing up the hole.

But ILM's effects razzle-dazzle doesn't come cheap, nor did the sequel rights, bought from Helmdale for Cameron by Carolco. An early ILM bid to handle all the film's effects work reportedly came in at \$26 million, prompting Cameron to farm out most of the film's non-CGI work to Fantasy II and an in-house effects unit headed by Bob and Dennis Skotak. The budget of *TERMINATOR 2*, according to *Variety*, has now escalated to \$82 million. A source close to

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Schwarzenegger in *TERMINATOR 2* looks bad, but now he's the hero instead of the original's unstoppable killer.



Pit and the

Director Stuart Gordon on adapting Edgar

By Steve Biodrowski

The past two years have not been kind to Stuart Gordon. After bursting onto the horror scene with outrageously inventive films like *RE-ANIMATOR*, *FROM BEYOND* and *THE DOLLS*, his career hit a few snags: first, his jump from cult to mainstream success was delayed when illness prevented him from directing *HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS* (though he did receive co-story credit and will executive produce the sequel); then *ROBOT JOX*, his low-budget attempt at action-packed science fiction, fell into distribution limbo after the collapse of Charles Band's Empire Productions, finally emerging a year later only to prove itself hardly worth the wait.

But now Gordon rebounds from those setbacks with *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM*, a film which takes the graphic intensity and black humor of his Lovecraft adaptations and sets them in the more tangible world of Edgar Allan Poe. Lance Henriksen stars as Torquemada, of the Spanish Inquisition, a role originally intended for Peter O'Toole. Jonathan Fuller and Rona De Ricci are the young innocents falsely accused of witchcraft when the Grand Inquisitor's dormant lust is aroused by a beautiful woman. Jeffrey Combs, Oliver Reed and Carolyn Purdy-Gordon (the director's wife) make cameo appearances. Band's new company, Full Moon Entertainment, produced the film for Paramount, which provided financing in exchange for theatrical and video distribution rights. A March video bow was scrapped to explore theatrical release possibilities.

Last year saw a spate of Poe-inspired productions, but the idea of adapting "The Pit and the Pendulum" occurred to Gordon before then. "I'd always

"We focused on the character of Torquemada, which was not part of Poe's story," said Gordon. "He invented the Inquisition and wrote 28 books on the rules of torture."



Torquemada extracts a confession from Jonathan Fuller, accused of witchcraft. Gordon's Poe adaptation was filmed for video but may receive a theatrical release.

been a big fan of Edgar Allan Poe's writings and also of the Corman films," said Gordon. "It seemed like there was a whole new generation out there coming to Poe fresh, so I thought it was time for new adaptations of his work. I guess other people felt the same way!"

Gordon chose to adapt this particular story "because it's so visual and action-oriented—perfect for film. Also, the idea came out of a visit I made to the Tower of London. I realized the things that people actually do to each other are far scarier than anything you can fantasize about—the worst monsters are people. It struck me that 'The Pit and the Pendulum' is set during the Spanish Inquisition, a period that is extremely cruel and frightening, and a film of that could be truly hor-

rific." Knowing that major studios would be hesitant to tackle such grueling subject matter, Gordon pitched the idea to Band. "We had done several pictures together in Italy but had never taken advantage of the location—we were always pretending to be in America."

To expand Poe's short tale into a screenplay, Gordon collaborated with Dennis Paoli, who had previously co-written Gordon's Lovecraft adaptations. "Poe's story is very short, about fifteen pages, so it would not sustain a feature," said Gordon. "Using Corman's influence, we borrowed things from other Poe stories: there's a segment from 'Cask of Amontillado,' and one of our characters is buried alive. We ultimately get to Poe's tale in the last half hour." Gordon laughed.

"Also we focused on the

character of Torquemada, which was not part of Poe's story, and used a lot of our research. We discovered that Torquemada invented the Inquisition, and he approached it very meticulously. He formalized everything. He wrote, I think 28 books on the rules of torture, and he had all of the trials transcribed. So there were these incredible records of everything, and we were able to incorporate a lot of that into the film."

The project went through a long period of development which included a one-year hiatus when the original financial backing fell through. "It took all kinds of strange turns," recalled Gordon. "Originally, the financing was coming from Vestron, who wanted a major star. We approached Peter O'Toole about playing Torquemada, and he was interested. The only problem was that he was not able to leave Great Britain during the time that we wanted to shoot. There's some kind of custody arrangement with his son, which means that he has to reside in England during certain months of the year. So we ended up moving the whole production to Elstree Studios, built the sets, and cast English actors—and were ready to make the movie when the bottom fell out because Vestron went down the tubes."

With the production on hold, Gordon lost his star, but O'Toole's approach to the character remains an important influence on the finished film. "O'Toole had some interesting ideas about how Torquemada should be played, which were terrific, and we ended up using them," said Gordon. "Torquemada does not see himself as a villain. He sees himself on a mission from God. So, rather than playing him as this snarling, evil presence, we decided to make him a

Pendulum

Allan Poe's tale of the Spanish Inquisition.

very driven man who has this sense that God is speaking directly to him, which gives him the divine right to disregard the Pope and everyone else in order to do what he thinks has to be done."

Ultimately, Gordon thinks the delay benefited the film. "Charlie worked out an arrangement with Paramount and did several videos for them, such as PUPPET MASTER. He showed them a copy of the PIT AND THE PENDULUM screenplay, and they ended up giving him double what the normal video budget would be, with the hope that it could be released theatrically. But that budget was about half what we had had a year ago. We went back to the original plan to shoot in Italy, at a castle which Charlie owns. Doing that, we were able to cut some corners financially and ended up with a movie that has a greater scope than our original one would have. We recast it with American actors, a lot of them members of my 'repertory' company. It worked out better in the long run. When I look back, I'm glad that we didn't shoot it a year ago.

"The great thing about postponing the picture," Gordon continued, "was being able to come back to the script a year later and re-read it. We realized that a lot of material would have been lost on the audience. We had all this information about the wars with the Moors going on in Spain and Queen Isabella trying to unite Castille and Aragon into one country. All of that stuff was interesting background, but it really had nothing to do with our story. We realized that for an audience today—many of them don't even know there was a Spanish Inquisition—we needed to portray the Inquisition,



Gordon directs Rona De Ricci as an innocent on the rack, interrogated by torturer Mark Margolis and scribe Jeffrey Combs, seen as a cautionary tale of political relevance today.

and to focus on our characters. It ended up strengthening the script."

Gordon's direction is typically graphic. Makeup effects, including several unsettling torture scenes, were devised by Greg Cannom (EXORCIST III). Gordon's fans, however, may be surprised to find that context often prevents the violence from going over the top. "We tried to balance it with other things," said Gordon. "The violence is upsetting because it really happened. You don't have to worry about some creature from beyond biting your head off, but the idea that somebody could arrest you and do whatever he wanted to you is very scary. One of the things we debated was whether the torture would be too much. We decided we had to be very careful."

One of the elements Gordon used to balance the film is the kind of macabre humor he derives from taking horror so far that it goes past the point of absurdity. (In one scene, for instance, a witch, prior to being burned at the stake, swallows gunpowder, so that her body explodes and kills her executioner.) In fact, Gordon's ver-

sion of THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM seems almost like an inversion of the old: whereas Corman played straight man to Vincent Price's tongue-in-cheek performance, Gordon often goes for the laugh while Henriksen plays it straight.

"That was intentional," said Gordon. "The subject is so bleak and disturbing that if you did it without humor it would be impossible for an audience to sit through—it would be too depressing. I think you need black comedy or gallows humor in this movie; you need that release. I like to move from horror to comedy, to break the tension and then build it again."

Another way Gordon provides a distance from the unsettling events on-screen is by introducing a small fantasy element: some of the witches being tortured are genuine. "We deal with witchcraft in a very positive way, as the religion of Mother Nature. We wanted to add a little magic, which gives you a way to escape the torture, but we wanted the magic we're portraying to be based on something factual, so we tried to limit it to E.S.P. and the kind of phenomenon being

studied today, like out-of-body experiences, rather than turning someone into a toad."

Although Gordon used such devices to make the subject matter palatable to an audience, he never soft-peddled Torquemada's tyranny and torture, which he saw as an integral part of the film's theme. "In my other pictures, the fantasy was able to give you distance. With this picture, I felt there was an important message there. I've been feeling that our society has been moving in an Inquisition-like direction, with all of the recent stuff that's been going on with censor-

ship and the fundamentalists getting so much power. Some of the ideas for this film were influenced by the stuff that's happened with Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart—the hypocrisy of that holy roller type. Now is a good time for people to be told this story as a cautionary tale." □

Lance Henriksen as Torquemada, a role intended for actor Peter O'Toole.



SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK

Producer Dino DeLaurentiis tries to mine the King horror franchise on television.

By Mark Dawidziak

The broken bodies of once-confident directors litter the trail of Hollywood's attempts to adapt horror master Stephen King's works. But despite the dismal track record of his many predecessors, Tom McLoughlin isn't a bit scared about directing a TV movie version of King's *Night Shift* short story "Sometimes They Come Back."

"I'm more honored than intimidated," said McLoughlin, whose feature films include *FRIDAY THE 13TH, PART IV: JASON LIVES* (1986) and *DATE WITH AN ANGEL* (1987). "Stephen King is our modern-day Edgar Allan Poe. I hold him in awe, but I probably would be more intimidated by a script by William Goldman or Richard Matheson. That's because I can relate more to Stephen King's writing.

"You look at people like Ste-

Director Tom McLoughlin, filming the feature project turned television movie.



ANIMAL HOUSE star Tim Matheson as King's haunted high school teacher in the "Night Shift" story about punks who return from the grave, to air on CBS in May.

phen King and Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, and you see we all had much the same childhood. We were all shaped by the same influences. So I can see where King is coming from. And I can appreciate King's genius for reinterpreting and drawing on those common influences."

SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK, which CBS will probably air in April or May, is the sixth time producer Dino DeLaurentiis has turned to a story by King. The association started with *THE DEAD ZONE* (1983), which many critics cite as one of the few good film adaptations of a King work. But critics also say that the DeLaurentiis efforts all went downhill from there: *FIRE-*

STARTER (1984), *CAT'S EYE* (1985), *SILVER BULLET* (1985), and *MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE* (a 1986 flop directed by King).

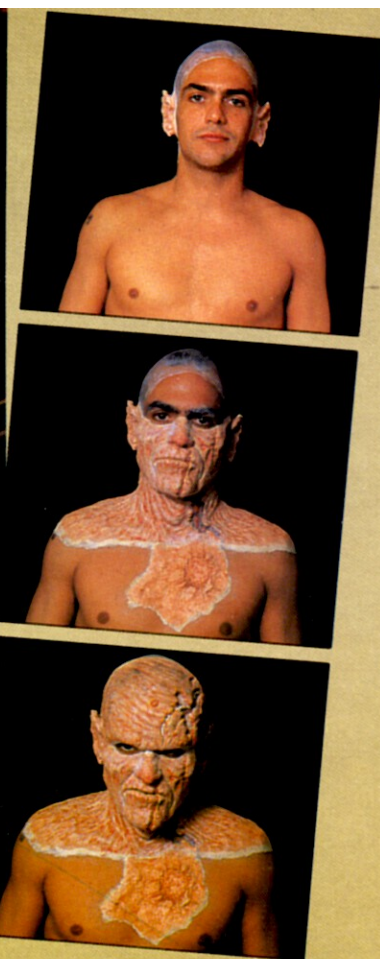
Despite financial troubles, DeLaurentiis retained control of a few King stories including "Sometimes They Come Back," the disturbing tale of a teacher terrorized by the ghosts of the punks who killed his brother. "Dino has had it in development for a good two or three years," said McLoughlin. "What finally made it possible was the deal Dino struck with [CBS Entertainment President] Jeff Sagansky. Dino makes TV movies for CBS; then they get released overseas as feature films."

DeLaurentiis is executive

producer, with Michael Murphy of Soisson/Murphy Productions as producer. Tim Matheson, who starred in *NATIONAL LAMPOON'S ANIMAL HOUSE*, plays the high-school English teacher coping with terrors from his childhood. Brooke Adams, who appeared in *THE DEAD ZONE*, plays his wife. William Sanderson (Larry of Larry, Darryl and Darryl fame on *NEWHART*) also stars in the TV movie that completed principal photography after a five-week November/December shooting schedule in the Kansas City area.

Adams had decided against doing the movie after reading the script by Mark Rosenthal and Lawrence Konner (*SUPERMAN IV*). She reconsidered when McLoughlin told her that he was working on a rewrite. "It's still by and large Rosenthal and Konner's adaptation," said McLoughlin, who worked on the script with Tim Cring. "It's what they created. Tim and I tried to sew things up a little better."

The rewrite convinced Adams, and the November ratings success of ABC's *IT* miniseries increased CBS executives' enthusiasm for **SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK**. In a fit of optimism, CBS expressed hope that the King project would be ready for the February sweeps period. "That was way too premature," said



Nicholas Sadler as the walking corpse who comes back to plague Matheson. Inset Left: Prior to decomposition, Sadler as the high school punk who killed Matheson's brother. Right: Sadler undergoes the makeup process designed by Gabe Bartalos.

McLoughlin. "We might be able to deliver a rough cut by March."

In addition to the IT miniseries, two King theatrical films were released in late 1990: GRAVEYARD SHIFT and director Rob Reiner's MISERY. McLoughlin hoped to beat the odds by emulating one of the successful King translations, Reiner's STAND BY ME. "This is much closer to STAND BY ME and THE DEAD ZONE than PET SEMATARY," said McLoughlin. "You can't go that far on network television, so this explores some of those fears and anxieties that take hold in your mind when you're a child. Our central character, when he was very young, saw his older brother killed by hoods. At the time, he ran, and he feels like he's been running ever since. So, at the core, you have a wonderfully scary thing—a fear of bullies. And what happens if they come back?"

"As an adult, the character played by Tim Matheson gets a teaching job in his hometown. At the moment he decides to put his life back together, he's faced with the most unsettling horror. One by one, the punks who killed his brother start

“Stephen King is our modern-day Edgar Allan Poe,” said director Tom McLoughlin. “This explores some of the fears and anxieties that take hold of your mind as a child.”

appearing in his class. Is he crazy? If they're real, can he prove it? Can he stop them? You get this terrific blend of supernatural horror and psychological terror that's quite frightening. But you do most of that with acting, not special effects."

The TV movie is not devoid of the more obvious shocks and scares. The corpse makeup for SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK was designed by Gabe Bartalos (FRANKENHOOKER). "Being less dependent on gore effects, you get the wheels turning," said McLoughlin. "You walk that wonderful line between fantasy and very real psychological terror. Hopefully, we've crafted a piece that will appeal to a wide audience and appease Stephen King fans."

"But the nature of this work is another reason I didn't feel at

all scared about approaching it. I would have been more fearful with MISERY or IT, a big bestseller that everyone knows and loves. I remember seeing THE SHINING the first day it was out and being angry as hell over what Stanley Kubrick did with that movie. I was such a fan of the book. But SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK is a short story. It's a germ of an idea for a screenplay."

Those who know the story should be prepared for several changes. In the story, the teacher's wife is killed by thugs. In the movie, Adams is allowed to survive the final credits. At the end of the story, the teacher summons a demon in a ritual that includes hacking off two fingers. At the end of the movie, the characters are rewarded with a more traditional happy ending without the dismemberment. In the

story, the teacher is left alone with a nagging hint of doubt. In the movie, good gets the last laugh over vanquished evil.

"There's more of a classic cathartic feel to the movie's ending," said McLoughlin. "The goal in the movie is not to just get rid of the punks, it's to stop running. The other major change is that we've added a character. We've given him a son, and he's been desperately trying to recreate his relationship with his brother more than twenty years later with his son. My only unfulfilled wish for this movie is that I wanted more humor in it. But you can't force it in, especially when you're shooting what was intended as a feature on a TV movie schedule. That was the toughest thing about making SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK."

There have been seventeen King theatrical films since CARRIE got things rolling in 1976. And, while SALEM'S LOT and IT were done as miniseries, SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK is the first King property to be made a TV movie.

"If this works for Dino," McLoughlin said, "it won't be the last." □

TEENAGE MUTANT

Behind-the-scenes, filming the animatronic

By Gary L. Wood

With over \$132 million in the bank from their first feature, there was little doubt that the Heroes-in-the-Half-Shell would return to local theatres in a new adventure, TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II: THE SECRET OF THE OOZE. What was a surprise, however, was the speed with which the production was realized. The sequel began filming last October, a mere six months after the debut of the first movie proved a surprise hit, and opened March 22, less than a year after the release of the original. On the drawing boards: TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES III, due to begin filming in September for release in March 1992.

Hong Kong-based producer Golden Harvest and distributor New Line Cinema have turned the Turtles phenomenon into a well-oiled money-making machine. Fact: When Warner Bros discovered the release date they selected to open THE NEVER ENDING STORY II was the same day the Turtles were set to blitz theatres, Warners quietly moved up the release date of their film to February 8 to avoid competing with the Turtles merchandising juggernaut. The Turtles rule, indeed.

The TURTLES II production literally invaded the Wilmington, North Carolina studios built by Dino DeLaurentiis, now owned by Carolco, and dominated the lot's offices and soundstage space. That fact was immediately evident on strolling down the Studio's RAMBO Drive onto TOTAL RECALL Way only to find that the street sign outside the temporary office of Jim Henson's Creature Shop had been altered to read TURTLE RECALL Way.

Laying on a mattress out-

“How long this is going on, one doesn't know,” said director Michael Pressman. “It could be the most amazing phenomenon of all time as opposed to ending like the Cabbage Patch Doll.”



Ernie Reyes Jr., a stunt Turtle in the original, plays Keno, a pizza delivery boy with a Kung Fu kick, teaming up with Raphael (Kenn Troman), the Turtle loner.

side one soundstage was Rahzar, the mutated wolverine that serves as one of the Turtle's new nemeses. Inside the large, red-haired monster, a human head poked out, incongruously dozing away. Taking a break from the film's animatronic action, the actor blocked out the sounds of the bustling lot with headphones while soaking up the sun. Rahzar, like the sequel's other new ani-

matronic monsters, Tokka, a snapping turtle mutation, and the ooze-created Super Shredder, were all considered “top secret” on the set. Visiting press had to sign statements agreeing not to take pictures. And to preserve the magic of the Turtles animatronics, photos of the suited Turtle actors without their heads were also prohibited.

The rush of filming on the

Carolco lot was nowhere more evident than in the TURTLES II production office and on the set. After each day's worth of film was delivered to the unit's office headquarters, editors immediately began their work assembling the footage to keep up with the production's hectic schedule. In his studio office, producer Terry Morse held court, explaining the operation.

“There are two editors right down the hall cutting right behind us,” said Morse. “They're working *right to camera!* As we shoot it, they edit it. The director [Michael Pressman] goes in at lunch time and looks over certain scenes and gives his notes. Then [producer] David Chan makes his notes. So everything is locking up as we go.” Chan produced the original film, as well. Pressman, filling the shoes of MTV director Steve Barron, who made the original, is a comedy specialist who directed his first feature for Roger Corman, with credits including Richard Pryor's SOME KIND OF HERO (1982) and Dan Aykroyd's DOCTOR DETROIT (1983).

The rush by Golden Harvest to get TURTLES II to the screen is no doubt an attempt to hold onto the Turtles' popularity. An article in *The Wall Street Journal* late last year announced the impending death of the Ninja Turtles craze with burial said to be soon, next to the Pet Rock. All hands on the new movie, therefore, worked full speed ahead to beat the coroner and prove that the Turtles are indeed much more than the next TRANSFORMERS or MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE fad.

Among all the hype and hustle of Turtlemania, it was announced that Barron and Simon Fields, Barron's pro-

NINJA TURTLES II

wonders of the Jim Henson Creature Shop.



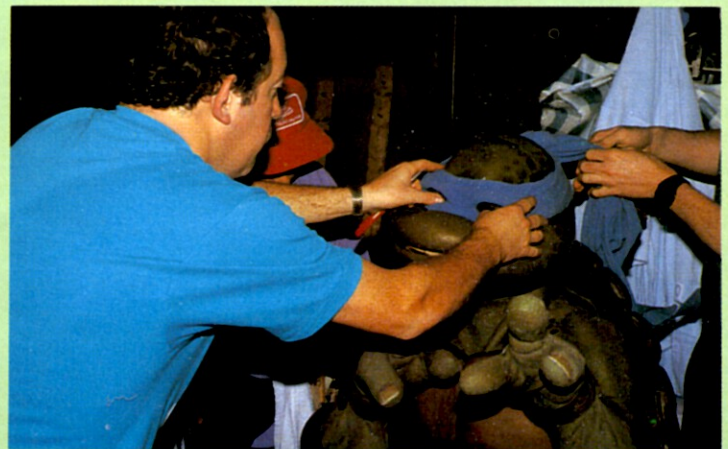
The Turtles, Troum in foreground as Raphael, in back (l to r) Mark Caso as Leonardo, the group's unofficial leader, Michelan Sisti, visible inside, through the teeth, as joker Michaelangelo, and Leif Tilden as Donatello, the shy gadget whiz. Below: Caso clowns as his head is adjusted by dressers on the set. The actors are virtually blind inside suits designed and built by the London-based Jim Henson Creature Shop, with small vision slits cut just below the eye masks, making performances a chore.

ducing partner in Limelight productions which made the original film, were suing Golden Harvest for \$5 million. The suit charged that Barron and Fields had not received their fair share of the profits, claimed to be ten per cent of the net. Both Fields and Barron declined to be interviewed.

Art director Mayne Berke (GRAVEYARD SHIFT) summed up the production rush plainly: "Twice as many sets and half as much time," said Berke. At a budget of \$20

million, the sequel is costing more than twice what was spent making the original.

To meet the film's exacting schedule, a second unit crew, normally used only for minor shots that are too troublesome and time consuming to warrant the time of the director and first unit crew, was called upon to film many action sequences and work the Henson animatronic heads in scenes that preceded and followed the key sequences shot by the main unit. Veteran stunt



TURTLES II

DIRECTING THE ANIMATRONICS

For comedy specialist Michael Pressman, the film caps fifteen years of production expertise.

By Gary L. Wood

TURTLES II director Michael Pressman doesn't think the Turtles are overexposed, despite the mushrooming Turtles merchandising phenomenon. "They're definitely growing [in popularity], which is almost unbelievable," said Pressman. "It seems to me that every venue, whether it be the merchandising, the Saturday-morning cartoon, the live rock band, the live-action feature film, the video cassette sales, they all seem to be feeding each other. That's a majoreye-opener in terms of marketing."

But not everyone in charge of producing and distributing TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II at Golden Harvest and New Line Cinema is so sure. The writing of the sequel began almost immediately after the release and initial success of the first film. The sequel was originally announced for a February 1991 production start, but was quickly moved up to October 1990. Filming completed in December for a planned release March 22.

The accelerated schedule was an obvious rush to ride the wave of Turtlemania before it crashes to the rocky shore of past American fads. Pressman somewhat agreed on the justification for rushing the production. "How long this is going on, one doesn't know," he said. "But there seems to be nothing on the horizon that indicates a decline. It could be the most amazing phenomenon of all time. It could become part of the culture like Mickey Mouse, Superman and Batman, as

opposed to ending up being something like the Cabbage Patch Dolls.

"I think what was driving the schedule was some of that [uncertainty]. It's like saying, 'This thing is moving fast! Let's stay fast with it!' In some respects it would be a *mistake* to kind of sit back like a STAR WARS and take two years between films."

How did Pressman see the Turtles' popularity compared to George Lucas' outer space saga? "I suppose the big difference is that it doesn't feel as *profound* as STAR WARS," said Pressman. "That hit the adult psyche in a different way. With the kids, if you've got a five year-old you don't want to wait until he's eight. It's a rush, but it's definitely not a normal rush. I think it was about staying with the ride."

Pressman said the production rush was nothing new for Henson's Creature Shop, who also created the animatronic Turtles on a tight schedule for the first film. "The quality's improved tremendously," said

Director Pressman (l), watching a take on his video monitor, as Shredder greets his ooze-induced mutations Tokka and Rahzar on the set of his junkyard hideout.



The Turtles with Paige Turco as April, played in the original by Judith Hoag.

Pressman of the animatronics. "The first film was a prototype for them. On *this* one they could really get it down and *they did*. The work that they did on the Turtles' faces is phenomenal this year, far more advanced than last year. They're really an incredible group, very dedicated. They want it right and they want it *great*. I find that kind of a tall order that I want to try to achieve."

Pressman has directed six features, including Roger Corman's THE GREAT TEXAS DYNAMITE CHASE (1977) and BAD NEWS BEARS IN BREAKING TRAINING (1977), but for the last five years has concentrated mostly on directing movies for television, writing scripts and work-

ing in theatre. "It's a great break for me," said Pressman about winning the job of directing the Turtles. "I had a couple of flops. The business is very tough. I seem to be at the perfect point in my life in terms of my work and my personal life, to be able to handle something as difficult as this. To me, it embodies all my feature film background and my television background coming together, working quickly, making decisions, and at the same time knowing that this is for the big screen. Also, I love comedy and I'm really going for comedy on this film."

Though Pressman hesitated to make a boxoffice prediction—"That would be jinxing it," he said—he did venture to estimate a gross for the sequel of anywhere between \$75 million "at the south end" to \$150 million. "If we've got a movie that's more advanced than the last one, more fun because it's more humorous, with a lot more spectacular action, a much faster moving kind of story—the picture already *looks* a little more lavish—we might have a *better* movie. I just keep trying to shut that stuff out because it's too scary for me. Everyone hopes that it's going to do better than the first one." □

coordinator Terry Leonard (CONAN, THE BARBARIAN) was hired to direct the second unit due to his familiarity with shooting action sequences.

Morse explained why the use of Leonard's second unit was so unusual. "We have *two* concurrent units," said Morse. "Terry Leonard is a top, top director. He's doing the time-consuming shots that we can't take on with first unit—the stunts, the people flying through the air, the special rigs, and a lot of the fight stuff. He can do that all with the stunt Turtles, but he is also working with the animatronic heads. Once they do a fight scene they've got to say something. We can't do all that with the first unit. So Terry's got a lot of responsibility. He's going to have a lot of footage in this picture.

"Second unit directors normally don't do dialogue scenes," Morse emphasized. "*They don't do dialogue.* They just do action—the cars rolling over, or the horses falling down. But this time Terry has to do a little of each.

"It's almost like two movies going at once," noted Morse. "The second unit has a complete crew. They have sound. They have assistant directors from L.A. They have a cameraman from L.A. They've got Panavision cameras, the video feeds, and the playbacks just like the first unit does. The second unit's very important because, without them, it would take us twice as long."

Though the Turtles—Mike, Raph, Leo, and Don—are back, many other changes have occurred in the story that revolves around the Turtles' search for the source of their mutation, the ooze. April O'Neil, originally played by Judith Hoag, is returning in the form of Paige Turco, an alumna of TV's ALL MY CHILDREN. The character of Casey Jones is gone, "on vacation" according to screenwriter Todd W. Langen, replaced by Keno, a pizza delivery boy played by martial artist Ernie Reyes Jr., who stumbles onto the existence of the Turtles and the Foot, led by Shredder.

On the set, Reyes said he looked forward to continuing

DESIGNING TURTLE ACTION

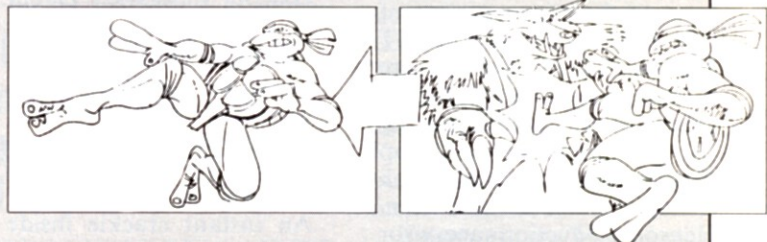
Storyboard artist Mike Davis, who drew the action blueprint for TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II, calls his craft "directing on paper." Davis, who has done boards for TREMORS and PEE WEE'S PLAYHOUSE, had worked with TURTLES II director Michael Pressman previously on a television project.

"My job was to feed him ideas," said Davis. "I sort of choreographed the action—I shouldn't say choreograph because we certainly had a lot of stunt coordinators as well. I simply put the initial path on paper. Pressman worked with the writer to hone the script to his vision. He was busy casting the puppeteers and working with the guys in costume. He didn't have that much time to plot down specific angles."

Davis comes from an animation background, having worked at New York's Broadcast Arts. He said the trick to designing Turtles action was "not to make it too violent. First you put the Turtles in peril, then you have to find a funny way to get them out of it. The difference in this film is that you are going to have a lot of the martial arts stuff, but there will be more of



In storyboards by Michael Davis, supervillains Tokka (l) and Rahzar advance on the Turtles. Below: Raphael attacks and bounces off Rahzar harmlessly.



these funny highlights."

Besides his work as a storyboard artist, Davis is a writer and director well, talents he finds essential in storyboarding. THE MUNCHIES, his direct-to-video directing debut, is set for release later this spring. "It's got a lot of Muppet-like characters that I got to design," he said. On the writing front, Davis said he has interested director

Jonathan Demme in a screenplay he wrote which is being pitched at Orion Pictures.

"I have met people making movies who really can't see the film in their heads," said Davis. "They don't really pre-conceive how the film is made. Filmmakers that don't use a storyboard artist aren't using all the colors on the palette to make a movie."

Gary Wood

More Davis designs for the film's climactic battle: Donatello's attack with a bow proves equally comic and fruitless.



When Donatello apologizes, Tokka throws him for a loop, designs drawn by Davis from Todd Langen's screenplay.



Tokka turns, bringing his spikes to bear on Michaelangelo, in boards by Davis that served as a blueprint for filming.



the Keno role in further Turtle adventures and doesn't see the Turtles as just another fad about to die a quick death. Noted Reyes, "I think this is much bigger than any of them—THE TRANSFORMERS, or HE-MAN, or anything like that. I think the movies keep it creatively fresh. The whole idea is to not bore the kids. Once it gets boring, the kids'll change their minds in a second. As far as I see it, I don't see *any* hint that the Turtles are going out right now. They make billions of dollars a year in Turtle merchandise. It's crazy. That's good enough proof for me that they're going to be around for a little while."

Perhaps the most interesting facet of the screen success of the TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES movies are the advances accomplished in animatronic puppeteering by the Henson Creature Shop that has made the comic book characters come alive onscreen. Henson production supervisor William Plant noted that new operator control boxes introduced on the sequel "really give the puppeteers a flexibility they have not had before. They can concentrate on their performance rather than just making things move."

Another new advancement on the sequel that has streamlined production is the use of back-up animatronic heads for

Michaelangelo puppeteer Mak Wilson in action: performing a Turtle combines acting talent with video game dexterity.



TURTLES II

THE PUPPETEERS BEHIND THE SCENES

A Turtle performance is the collaboration of an actor inside the suit and a Henson puppeteer.

By Gary L. Wood

When asked which Ninja Turtle he was operating, Henson puppeteer David Greenaway responded, "Raphael. I got the first question right!" Greenaway's joke got transmitted by the headset he was wearing into the Turtle head and ear of actor Kenn Troom. An instant crackle inside Greenaway's headset brought Troom's response. Laughed Greenaway, "No, my Turtle says he's Donatello."

Greenaway is a freelance puppeteer who often works for Henson. "I did the same Turtle last year," said Greenaway. "This year, in terms of ease of operating these things, it's much more positive. Last year it was: 'Can we get it done? Will it work?'" Puppeteer Robert Tygner, operator of Leonardo, agreed, "We're filming on what we should've been filming on in the first one," he said. "That we filmed on a prototype. It's really amazing that they've made it simpler. Now it takes only one puppeteer to work an electronic head."

An odd bond between puppeteer and Turtle is formed during the filming of a TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES movie. The bond was strengthened on the sequel with the utilization of a new two-way communication system developed by Henson's Creature Shop, not available for their work on the first film. In the headset, Greenaway said he hears everything his Turtle actor hears. "The motors in the head. *Everything.* And his breathing. And his complain-



The Turtles, clockwise from top, Michaelangelo, Donatello, Raphael and Leonardo, are provided with facial expressiveness via radio control.

ing."

Robert Mills, the puppeteer of Donatello, elaborated. "Essentially you're riding around in the costume with the performer," said Mills. "You don't have the loveliness of being able to sweat. We sit back and we listen to them." Added Tygner, "Sometimes it gets really confusing, but we can switch the actors off."

"We have *total control!*" Mills laughed.

It takes four people to fully bring one Turtle to life on the screen: one puppeteer, one actor in a Turtle suit, one stunt Turtle, and a voice performer who will supply the dialogue for the finished film, which is added in post-production. But it is the puppeteer/actor combination which is truly the foundation of all the on-screen magic.

"We're their eyes," said Tygner of the puppeteer's role. "We're seeing what the camera

sees. When they're in those costumes, the actor's can't see. They're not aware of where the cameras are."

Mills added, "And we rely on them to provide us with good, clean movements that are typical of the character so that our face performance works. At the same time, we've got to help them out with certain directions. It's a real cooperative effort."

Henson production supervisor William Plant pointed out that, though no one else on the set can hear, the actor inside the Turtle suit is also saying the lines in unison with the puppeteer. "They get a rhythm together," said Plant. "They rehearse it.

Our duplex communication system works a little bit like a telephone so both the puppeteer and the actor are in close communication. They can hear what the other is saying at the same time."

Rehearsal was vital for the Turtles' latest film performance. Henson puppeteer coordinator Mak Wilson was in charge of getting everything together before the October/November shoot. "I started at the beginning of July," said Wilson. "That was just talking, going through the storyboards for anything that involved Turtles to see if we needed a rig or any special props. I had to sort all that out with the director and producers.

"It's usually not fully decided until we do rehearsals which head we're going to use, whether we're going to go with stunt heads or 'meccys.' Then we just have to decide where to place our equipment [the oper-



The Turtles puppeteers at the controls (l to r) Robert Tygner (Leonardo), Robert Mills (Donatello), Mak Wilson (Michaelangelo) and Dave Greenaway (Raphael). While in radio contact with the suited actors, the puppeteers watch the action on video monitors.

ator boxes and monitors]. We've got to get a good eyeline if we can, as clear as possible, decide how many monitors we need, how many cameras we've got set up. Sometimes we've got three cameras. Then we do a rehearsal with the Turtle heads off to see what's involved. Then we'll talk about the action with the actor. Then we'll rehearse with the heads on."

According to Mills, the puppeteers had three weeks of rehearsal prior to shooting in North Carolina. The time was spent getting used to the costumes, the equipment, and the performers. Once at the Carolco Studios in Wilmington, the puppeteers had two weeks of rehearsal with director Michael Pressman going through the scenes. "The blocking and stuff changes from rehearsal to shooting," noted Mills. "Everything changes as you get in front of the camera. Essentially what we're doing is working through the material so everyone is familiar with it and knows what the characters' motivations are. Then on the day [of shooting], that's when all the details of the characterization are worked out."

Added Tygner, "It's just like rehearsal with any actor in a play or a film. You rehearse a character but you may have to compromise on the set. But instead of one actor, we've got two."

Noted Henson supervisor Plant of the rehearsal process, "The puppeteer and the actor rehearse together a lot so by

"We don't have the loveliness of being able to sweat," said puppeteer Robert Mills, "but essentially we're riding around in the costume with the actor. It's a real cooperative effort."

the time they get to the set they know each other very, very well. They both lock into the character very easily. So when they *do* improvise, they are doing it in character."

Tygner noted how the art of puppeteering has evolved with the technology. "We've grown into this stuff as it's been developing to accommodate our needs as performers," he said. "Everything we want in terms of tools is there now. Getting used to it in rehearsal, or practice, or a shoot, is getting it to the point where it's second nature. You don't even have to think about it. Physically your fingers know what to do and where to go to get the expressions. That way you can stop thinking about it and concentrate on the lines."

Along with the developing technology, another factor that has served to strengthen the bond between puppeteer and actor is the experience of Henson puppeteers as puppet actors themselves. Wilson, who has worked at Henson's for about seven years, said he has seen movie sets from *inside* a character suit as well. "I used to do suit work," said Wilson. "I was one of the apes in GREYSTOKE. All four pup-

peteers here have done suit work. When we ask the Turtle actors to do something we need physically, we can communicate it a bit better. We know what's going on. We've done mask work so we know what to ask for from the head for certain angles. Some of it is a bit technical, but you haven't got to make it look that way, do you?"

Noted Mills, "The guys in the suits, they're doing all the really hard work. They're just physically drained at the end of the day. They lose five pounds of water alone. Physically the stress that they undergo is incredible. We get to sit back and twiddle our fingers but we've got our own stress. We tend to have our shoulders all hunched up around our necks, and our thumbs are sweating."

Each puppeteer, like the actor, has his own way of preparing for a scene and relieving stress. Mills noted how he used two baseballs, constantly rotating them around his hands between takes. "We were on the mall set and they had a sports store set up, and they had a big box of baseballs," said Mills, about how he hit upon the idea. "I have a smaller ver-

sion of these with chimes in them—they're from China. You roll them around in your hand, keep them going in circles. It limbers up your fingers. I've got a set of those at home but I didn't bring them with me, so I use these baseballs."

Tygner put in, "He basically stole them."

Mills put his finger to his lips, "Shhh! They've never left the studio lot. I just rotate them around. I do this out of nervous habit. It keeps my fingers loose." The habit relieves tension in Mills' hands, particularly on the right hand which has to constantly operate the Turtles' "mouth" movement. "It's a very small movement, said Mills. "There's very little room there. It's pulling a lot of tension across the back of your hand."

Tygner added quickly, "We have to wear sweatbands around our wrist, we sweat so much."

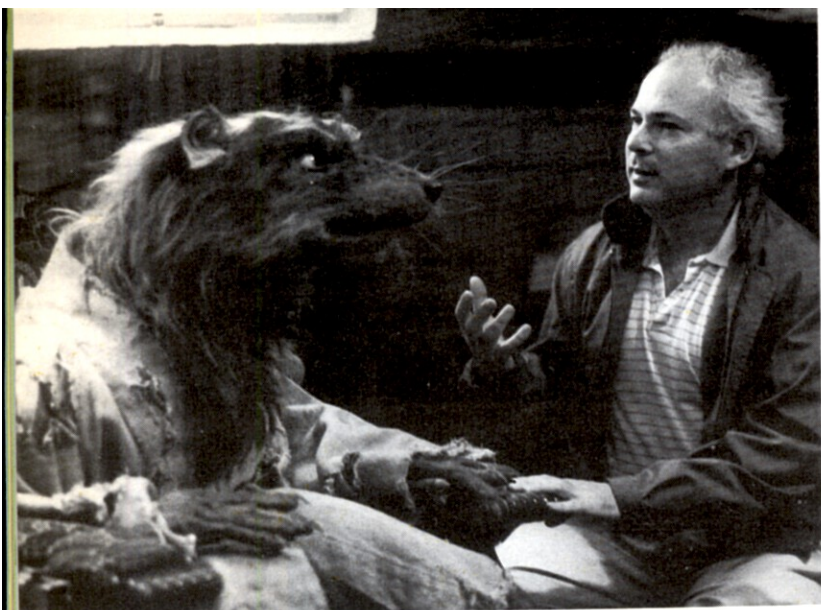
But Mills came clean, "He's lying." □

Greenaway operated an UrRu for Henson's *THE DARK CRYSTAL* (1983), animatronic technology in its infancy.



TECHNOLOGICAL ARTISTRY

“We designed the Turtle control boxes in such a way that the performer, or puppeteer, can dictate what he wants out of each control. It can be a frown, frustration, anger, anything.”



Michael Pressman directs Splinter, the Turtle's ninjitsu master, a Henson puppet with rod arms and hand-operated head, augmented by radio-control animatronics.

each character in the event of breakdowns. On the first film, there was only one head per Turtle. When frequent breakdowns or troubles occurred, there were but three options: go on to another Turtle while the techs worked on the head and come back to it later; continue to shoot using the malfunctioning head; or scrap the shot. When breakdowns occurred on the sequel, Henson

technicians simply took five minutes to pull off the malfunctioning head and put on a backup. The most common problems were electronic or mechanical failure.

Barron noted after directing the first film, “There was a fair amount of improvised shooting when a Turtle broke down. You’d move on to the other three Turtles. It was generally a very tough shoot, but pretty

remarkable considering we probably had attempted to introduce six new technologies in the creation of these Turtles. The rule is you never try more than one new technology on a show.” Nevertheless, Barron, who hired the Henson Shop after his experience directing episodes of Henson’s *STORY-TELLER* television series, applauded the work of the Henson crew, which was given only twelve weeks to design, build, develop and test the Turtles for the original. The process would normally have taken some sixteen weeks, plus the time needed for trial and error debugging. Noted Barron, “We had to be right the first time. Well, the Creature Shop was.”

Henson puppeteer coordinator Mak Wilson pointed out that advancements in the Turtle suits’ servo motor design have kept down the number of breakdowns on the sequel. The servos used on the new film to make the complex facial movements of the Turtle masks are actually inside the Turtle heads themselves. For the original, the servos were located outside the heads, stored underneath the backpack shell along with the battery, with cables fed up the back of the neck into the head to manipulate the latex face from inside.

“This year it’s a lot better because the cables are not coming up into the head,” said Wilson. “Last year the cables restricted the head’s movement

DRESSING THE TURTLES FOR SUCCESS

Rather than turn their precious Turtle suits and animatronic heads loose on a film crew, Henson Productions oversees every phase of their use in production, including providing “dressers” to attend to the needs of the actors and assure that the suits look their best in every shot. Costume construction supervisor Jill Thraves, who did a lot of work during preproduction building one of the Turtle’s new animatronic adversaries, also acted as a Turtle dresser during filming. “We go on the set because we know the most about the costumes, having built them ourselves,” said Thraves. “It’s fairly practical.”

Day Murch, also a costume construction supervisor who built suits alongside Thraves, is also a Turtle dresser who looks after



Dresser Jill Thraves and Leonardo. The equipment belt water bottle is to spray the suit before each take to make it glisten.

Donatello. Thraves cares for Leonardo. Both Murch and Thraves are used to working on odd creatures. Thraves worked for Henson on *LABYRINTH* while Murch tended to the apes in *GREYSTOKE* and *LINK*, though he has done straight costume work on films like *DANGEROUS LIAISONS* and *THE LAST EMPEROR*. Murch likened his work with the Turtles to

his assignment to dress an orangutan like a butler every day on *LINK*. Said Murch, “It is no employment for a grown man, I can tell you.”

To prepare the suits for the actors to don, piece by piece, Thraves noted, “We powder them down on the inside because they are a bit easier to get on.” The actors are unable to suit up without a dresser’s help. “We put their legs on to begin with,” said Thraves. “Then we take everything else [to the set]. Because it is so uncomfortable, we leave [everything else] off as long as possible. The head goes on last, just before a shot.” Underneath the Turtle’s shell lies the brunt of the suit’s weight, a backpack containing the suit’s battery and computer, strapped in a harness to the actor’s back. The shell is attached separately and is

counterbalanced in the front.

The dressers stay with their Turtle throughout the day. “We have to undress them when they have to go to the toilet,” said Thraves. “We provide drinks for them because most of them can’t get anything. We have to be available all the time for any eventuality. They undress at lunch time. After lunch they dress with a fresh suit.”

Added Murch, “Quite simply, they *can’t* scratch their noses or any other parts of their bodies [without us.]” To provide relief to their Turtles between shots, the “meccy” heads are the first things removed when time is available. “The heads are bloody heavy, and they restrict breathing,” said Murch. “They’re noisy. All the mechanics of the facial expressions are within about four inches of the head and ear.”

Gary Wood

TURTLES II

THE ELECTRONIC NINJA TURTLES

Jim Henson's Creature Shop provides a lesson in their state-of-the-art animatronics.

By Gary L. Wood

Though there is an actor inside the suit, a large part of the personality and heart of each Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle comes from the animatronic head that tops it off. With the head comes, of course, the characteristic mask and fierce grimace, but also the specific smile, watchful eyes, and facial tics that make each Turtle unique beyond their trademark color.

Though complex technologically, each head, or "meccy" as they are dubbed by the crew—short for mechanism—is little more than a radio-controlled puppet that sits on top of the Turtle actor, who has no control of the suit's mouth or other facial features. The high-tech puppeteer is a separate unit, located several yards away, operating the Turtles faces as if they were a complicated, live-action video game.

At first glance, it looked quite simple on the set. While the four Turtle actors moved the suits through the scene, four men wearing headsets sat at four separate consoles, or operator boxes, manipulating the four turtle heads.

The assistant director yelled, "Action!"

Michaelangelo, flat on his back from an encounter with animatronic adversaries Tokka and Rahzar, jumped up and was immediately surrounded by his reptilian brothers.

Leonardo asked, "You okay, Mike?"

Like a turtle ventriloquist, Leo's mouth moved but the voice seemed to be thrown from another part of the soundstage where the four puppet-

eers were sitting.

The action continued while the turtles picked out their opponents, "You take the ugly one!"

"No, you take the ugly one!"

"I'll take the ugly one!"

The dazed Mike yelled, "Which one's the ugly one?"

"Cut!"

When the action resumed for another take, on closer observation, it could be seen that it was the far-off puppeteers who were yelling the lines. In front of each sat a box with right and left joystick-like controls, an LCD screen and more push buttons between the joysticks.

"Action!"

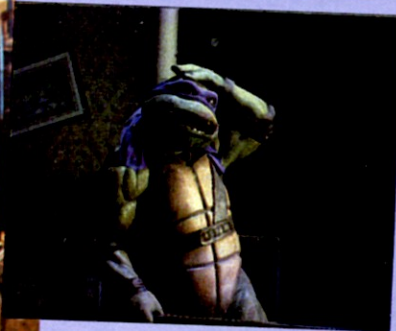
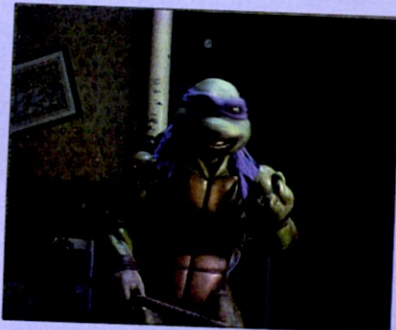
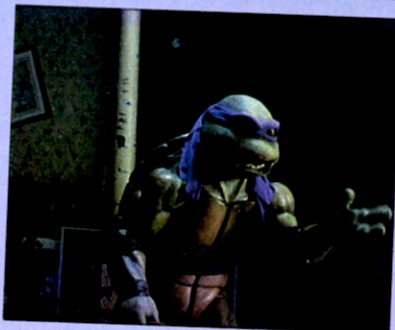
Michaelangelo jumped to his feet again for another take and his brothers gathered around. The puppeteer, with his right hand placed into a metal "mouth" configuration mounted on top of his right-hand stick, opened and closed his hand four times, in sync with his words, "You okay, Mike?" The rubbery mouth of Leonardo was seen to respond simultaneously and the latex-

shaped-like-a-turtle came to life.

It now seemed that all mysteries were revealed, but even closer observation showed that the headsets worn by the puppeteers were not normal Walkman phones. Attached to the earpieces of each was an apparatus that comes around the puppeteer's face like a face mask.

Time for a crash course in electronic puppeteering: "What you see in the control system is the combination of six years of research and development we have going in the [Jim Henson's] Creature Shop in London," said Henson production supervisor William Plant, who has worked at Henson's five of those years. "We have really tried to design a control system that enhances the performance capabilities of the puppeteers. It gives them an extra string in their bow, an added dimension to their performance. We have a control system that is designed to be as user friendly as possible, because puppeteers are not necessarily computer programmers. But they have to be *absol-*

Expressiveness comes courtesy of radio-controlled mechanisms under the foam latex. Below: Puppeteer Robert Mills at the controls, watches the result on video.



lutely familiar with them to get the performance out of them. We have designed the control boxes in such a way that the performer, or puppeteer, dictates what he wants out of each control."

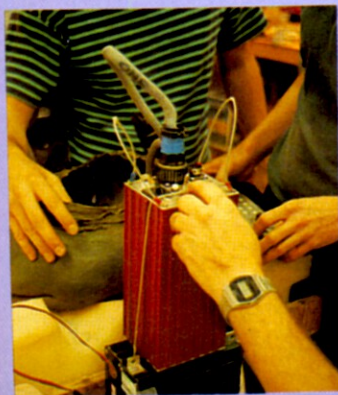
Plant said that the turtles' control boxes are much like "having a typewriter keyboard without any letters on it. The puppeteer puts on the letters wherever he wants them. The controls are assignable to any servo, or combination of servos the puppeteer wants. It can be a smile, a frown, frustration, anger, anything. What the controls do is mix gracefully between the expressions in live action format, so everything is absolutely hands on. There is no need to go back later and adjust it. We make use of the puppeteer's skills."

Puppeteer Dave Greenaway, who operates Raphael—or as the LCD display on his control box reads, "Welcome to Big Shakey Raph"—explained how he customized his own controls. "There are seventeen potentiometers here," said Greenaway. "In other words, seventeen levers that correspond to seventeen motors inside the Turtle's head. On any lever I can hit any number of motors."

Greenaway swiveled his "mouth" apparatus to the left and to the right, "This to me is eyes left and right," he said. "It controls the motor which directs this particular puppet's eyes left or right." Greenaway's single hand control action can thus open and close Raph's mouth and move his eyes simultaneously.

Grabbing his large left-hand joystick, Greenaway demon-

A Turtle head attached to the battery pack which is stored beneath the shell during filming, gets serviced in-shop.



TECHNOLOGICAL ARTISTRY

"We designed a control system that enhances the performance capabilities of the puppeteers. It gives them an extra string in their bow, an added dimension to their performance."



Puppeteer Robert Mills, with the mike and headphones of the Creature Shop's radio link, pointing to a face sensor that can be programmed to trigger any action.

strated that it, though larger, moves just like a standard joystick on a videogame. Moving the joystick in a cross pattern, Greenaway explained, "With this I have whole expressions of north, south, east, and west. I have a full expression of [respectively] smiling, 'let's kick shit,' 'I'm pissed,' 'I want to cry.'"

Greenaway then swiveled the joystick in a circular motion, from north to northeast, east to southeast, and so on. "Anywhere in between is a combination of those," he said. "If I switch the joystick this way," Greenaway twisted the base of the joystick to the right, setting the whole joystick off from its base position, "and lean the joystick one way, that's another 'let's kick butt' expression. And then another expression if I twist it the other way. These also add all together, effectively giving a whole new set of north, south, east and west emotions and variations on each."

But there's more joy to Greenaway's joystick. With his hand wrapped around the grip of his left joystick, Greenaway's fingers have access to four finger levers, and his thumb has easy access to a

small, black thumb-joystick. These features can be assigned to deliver any facial tick or movement the puppeteer desires. Greenaway, manipulating the four finger-levers which can move up and back, effectively giving eight positions, explained that each direction on each lever has a certain function for him. "The four buttons here I look upon as: a blink, eyes open, one eyebrow, another eyebrow, half a grin, eyes open, and then eyes up and down." The thumb-stick, which is also omni-directional, can also be programmed to do anything.

Plant said that the flexibility of the controls is vital. "The puppeteer does not have to learn how to use it," said Plant. "He can use his own senses. For example, that little thumb switch can do a whole smile if you push it up, and a whole frown when you push it down. If you push it left, you could have eyes left, you could have eyes left or eyes right. It does not matter. It's whatever the puppeteer wants it to be. It's virtually impossible for us, the technicians, to pick up a puppeteer's outfit and perform on it because they set them up anyway they want."

Plant also explained another new, important feature on the Turtle's control box. "There is a random generator," said Plant. "It enables the puppeteer to put some of the more trivial functions on a random automatic basis. Let's say, for example, every now and then you might want to have the eyes *dither* a bit. When you look at someone straight in the eye, rarely do the eyes stay dead center. They are always moving. You can program in an eye dither, one that works automatically so the puppeteer does not have to think about wagging the eyes every so often. It's the same with a blink. It has a random blink generator if you want it. It's just a wild puppeteer string."

Greenaway explained that he also has the option to switch the generator off when he does not want a blink, such as during times of shock or concentration. The random generator knob, located on the console just below the "mouth," also determines, by its setting, the frequency of the combination of actions selected.

With all of this, and only two hands, the puppeteer can draw from a range of facial expressions and emotions that would make Sylvester Stallone envious. But even with both hands busy, the puppeteer is far from being finished. He is still capable of manipulating the Turtle head using his own face. In addition to serving as a two-way radio for constant communication with the actor, the face mask attached to the puppeteer's headseat allows for further finessing in making the Turtles speak. Today's sophisticated audiences demand more from their creatures than a mouth that simply opens and closes.

The face mask is equipped with specially placed sensors. Each sensor is programmed to pick up a specific movement as the puppeteers mouth the Turtle dialogue. "These are just levers as well," explained Greenaway, fingering his mask. "They're programmed to my lips. When I say, 'Oh,' it measures the distance and makes the 'Oh' lip shape on the Turtle's mouth. This sensor is for the 'E' lip shape and another for the 'F' lip shape."



Puppeteer Dave Greenaway at the controls of Raphael, on the video monitor before him, during close-ups filming. In the background Raphael can be seen with off-camera Mark Caso as Leonardo, head off, feeding lines to Raphael's Kenn Troum. Left and Right: The control box, showing Greenaway's hands-on technique. At right is the red "mouth," which swivels right and left. The joystick at left moves in a variety of directions, also with thumb and finger buttons. Behind headset, center, is the unit's LCD display with function buttons.



Like the hand controls, Greenaway pointed out that the face sensors can also be versatile. "It's what you program in," he said. "You could just as well program in an eye blink every time you move your cheek. You can reset it as and when you want to."

For further versatility, these variations can be programmed on a moment's notice to allow for specific script demands or to combat spontaneous problems on the set. "They're doing some great things with the reset capabilities," said Greenaway. "For example, one of the problems we had last year is that if you're doing something and you're smiling, your cheek is up against the sensor that sets off the 'E' lip shape. It's stuck there. Now we have a resetter."

By punching the coordinating buttons, "Welcome to Big Shakey Raph" is replaced on Greenaway's LCD display by two vertical bars with an indicator on each. As Greenaway put his finger on the 'E' sensor, the indicator quickly raised on both bars. The bar on the left is the signal from Greenaway's

face. The bar on the right is the resulting servo motor-driven movement of the Turtle suit.

By resetting the sensitivity, Greenaway decreased the Turtle's reaction to his own facial movement. The indicator on the right—the Turtle's face—now moved up the bar slower while the indicator on the left bar—Greenaway's signal—moved as before. Greenaway effectively lessened (or could have increased) his effect on the Turtle. "It turns itself off," said Greenaway of the sensor. "And you can adjust the speed that it turns itself off."

The Turtle mechanics and computer interface run on a large battery located beneath the suit's shell on a back pack strapped to the actor. New batteries used for the sequel provide two to three hours of power versus the 20-30 minutes a battery would last on the original film. The puppeteers also have spare batteries charging within their control boxes should a problem arise during filming. "Sometimes if you get a servo problem, it can drain power," said Mak Wilson, who

operates "Mad Mikie" and acts as coordinator of all the puppeteers. "It'll drain it from the other servos and cause problems all over."

Plant pointed out that puppeteers also have the ability to "power down" the units between takes to conserve energy. "We have energy management control on the computer this year," said Plant of the sequel's improved Turtles. "We used different types of servos that don't have to be driven all the time to hold their positions." Wilson said advancements in the servo motor designs have kept down the number of breakdowns.

Plant is proud of the fact that Jim Henson Productions is "in a constant state of development" with great improvements made for each new project. "The dailies this time around are so much better," said Plant. "With almost no exception, every take is a *cracker!* The system is allowing the performers, actors, and puppeteers, to give a performance as opposed to just going through the motions." □

and if you had a breakdown it was usually in the cables going up into the head. Now all the servos are inside the head. Everything's a bit more contained. It's a bit noisier and hotter for the actor [who has to listen to the moving servos], but it's better. The actors used to have 22 pounds on their back. Now they've got only eleven and the head's the *same weight* as before. That's the amazing thing. They've lightened up the skull so the head's the same weight."

Turtle actor Michelan Sisti, who plays Michaelangelo, vouched for the importance of a lighter backpack. In one scene, Sisti, flat on his back, was called upon to jump up quickly and counterattack. "It's not easy," said Sisti about pulling the additional weight. "The backpack is very heavy. The shell is very heavy. You're fighting that to get up." But Sisti, who also played Michaelangelo in the original, rated his exertions a breeze when compared to carrying the weight of the old suits.

The Turtle backpacks on the first film, dubbed "meccy" packs because they housed the suit's complex mechanics, were indeed packed. Noted Plant about the old suits, "The backpack contained all the batteries, the onboard computer, the transmitter for communications, and the receiver

Michelan Sisti as Michaelangelo, flat on his back, jumps up for action, a tough stunt due to the suit's heavy backpack.



TURTLES II

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Film designer Roy Forge Smith and art director Mayne Berke on creating the sets for the Turtles' comic book action.

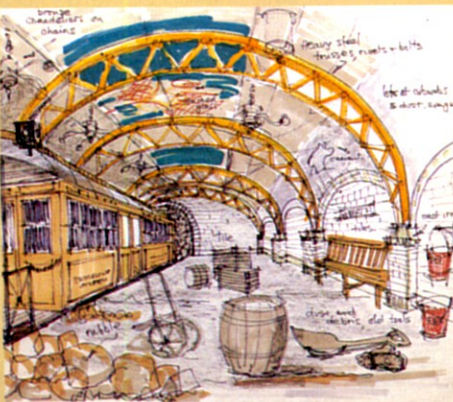
By Gary L. Wood

Standing on what was the most demanding and unusual set to be used for THE TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II, veteran production designer Roy Forge Smith, who has created set designs for genre efforts as disparate as WARLOCK, BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE, JABBERWOCKY, and MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL, looked up. Standing at the bottom of a set which would later be filled with water, Smith gazed up to a large, dirty pier which had recently been constructed and would

serve as the location of the climactic fight between the Ninja Turtles and the Super Shredder. Though Smith had designed the set months before, today he noticed something new.

"That's some nice bird shit up there," noted Smith in his proper English accent. Pointing to the cleats and ballards lining the edge of the pier, the set had been detailed with what appeared to be the white waste of seagulls. "I haven't seen that before." Mayne Berke, TURTLES II's young art director spoke up, "They just did that this morning. It's toothpaste and water, watered-down Pepsodent."

Smith's design sketch of the Turtles' underground hideout, built at Carolco Studios in North Carolina.



Family portrait, Smith (seated) and Berke on the set of the Turtles' subway lair. Turtle actor Michelan Sisti's inscription reads, "Roy, your genius and good cheer enrich us all."

Smith and Berke's efforts on the Turtles' sequel went far beyond finding a new use for toothpaste. Their equally impressive junkyard set, which serves as the Shredder's new hideout, is located on another soundstage on the North Carolina Carolco lot. Walking onto the set, only the lights and cameras break the illusion. The floor of the soundstage is completely covered with sand, a couple hundred oil barrels line one wall; stacked tires, hundreds of them, line another. Old cars, bought by the art department, were torn apart so that doors, hoods, and quarter-panels could be put together in sections flat against a third soundstage wall to disguise it. Against the fourth wall is a broken-down shed in which Shredder hides and gives birth to his new mutants, Tokka and Rahzar.

A construction site set is on the same soundstage as the expansive pier set. Only a large backdrop of New York City's night skyline and a water barrier along the floor separate the two. On the opposite wall is the facade of the film's "Dock Shore Club." The interior of the club, where the Turtles do their number with rapper Vanilla Ice, is located back across the studio in the same building as the junkyard set. Smith cited Geoffrey Grimsman as a key art department contributor, credited with adding to the sets' realism. Noted

Smith, "Besides being a superb draftsman with a lot of experience in film construction, he can make anything out of wood and make it look like anything else—marble, steel, concrete, etc."

Before designing the sets, Smith had to work out a detailed budget for producer Golden Harvest, with the aid of construction coordinator Tom Jones, who collaborated with Smith on the original film. "Tom and I worked out a formula which proved to be very accurate for budgeting," said Smith. "We figured all the cost of construction including labor, materials, plaster and fiberglass work,

steel structures, carpeting and scenic, etc. And we maintained daily checks on those figures during construction through Raye Brinson, the art department coordinator."

Smith explained that in addition to visualizing the locations called for in the script, he had to make some accommodations for the action. Looking around the pier set, Smith noted, "This was a very demanding one, very unusual. The script called for the Turtles to fall through the dock. They fall through the top layer and the fight continues on the bottom layer. That's how its shape emerged. Actually that's how most of the sets emerged, simply, from the demands of the story."

Smith began designing the sequel before there was a director attached. "This is a major art department picture," noted Smith. "It's the most expensive, design-oriented picture I've ever done." Once Michael Pressman came onboard, he naturally had "things he would like to see happen," and Smith obliged. Noted Smith, "Space on the whole dictates a lot. We had to put these two sets [the pier and the construction site] on this stage where the pier *should've* been on one whole stage and the construction site *should've* been on a whole stage." Berke agreed, "That was probably our *only* limitation, but we made every inch of soundstage count."

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TECHNOLOGICAL ARTISTRY

“The servos are now inside the Turtle heads. The actors used to have 22 pounds on their back. Now they’ve got only 11 and the head’s the same weight as before. They lightened up the skull.”

to receive the signal for the computer. It also had the servos. I think there were 26 or 27, housed in the backpack on a two-sided rack, along with a box with the large motor that controlled the jaw.”

Though he didn't work on the first film, Mark Caso, who plays Leonardo, is very happy with the advancements made on the suits. “The old suits had a bigger meccy pack,” said Caso. “They were *huge*, absolutely *huge*! All the servos were in there and they had all these cords running up the neck. Now it's smaller there and all the servos are in the head.” Though the Turtle heads are the same weight as before, the weight is now distributed more towards the front of the mask.

Noted Caso, “It's really tough on your neck.”

This is a particular problem for Caso who injured his neck in a gymnastics fall. After fighting his way out of a wheelchair to an acting career, Caso's neck is still sensitive. Between takes, Leonardo could be seen standing off to the side resting the heavy meccy head on his hand with his elbow propped onto his hip for support. “I'm always trying to give my neck some relief,” he said.

Plant pointed out other major improvements made by Henson on the Turtle heads used in the sequel. “You have the ability to take the head off much quicker,” said Plant. “You can actually remove the



Filming Turtle action on the New York street set built by Dino DeLaurentiis for **YEAR OF THE DRAGON**, at the Wilmington, North Carolina Carolco Studios.

head completely this year. Last year they could take the head off, but they had to rest it on the shoulder. That was it!”

But problems still cropped up during filming, despite the refinements. One common bugaboo encountered during shooting was radio interference from nearby Wilmington airport, passing cars and trucks, a dead spot on the sound stage, or even from the

other Turtles. According to Wilson, each puppeteer has his own control box, transmitter and antenna, and each Turtle receives electronic instructions only on its own designated frequency. “But sometimes you get them interfering with each other,” said Wilson. “Mostly it's just from a dead area. We did a shoot on the stage of the Dock Shore Club where Michaelangelo tried

SERVICING THE TURTLE ANIMATRONICS

“It's quite revolting,” said Chris Barton, supervisor of the service crew for the **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II**, about the state of the Turtle heads when they are given to him at the end of the day. Looking down at the upturned Turtle head on his work bench, Barton said, “We put disinfectant in them. If you're not careful it can get a little rancid. The sweat can affect the electronics in something like this.”

“All the circuitry has been tropicalized, they're water-tight,” said Barton. “Nonetheless, you can't pour a bucket of water in there and expect not to have problems. It gets very hot. We have air hoses in there to keep them cool, but when they come in at night we have to dry them. You can



Henson mechanical designer Chris Barton.

literally just wring them out.” Barton squeezed on the foamy fabric at the end of one of the Turtle heads to prove it. A blow-dryer was then taken to the head inside and out.

Barton said his schedule differs from most of the crew. He comes in late and leaves late. “Every night when they come off the set they get the skull caps taken out,” said Barton. “The costumes get a complete going over. All the linkages are checked, all the servos are checked, etc., etc. Everything's made sure to be working. If it isn't, if there's been a major hardware failure, the computer stuff is a bit out of my league.”

But help is just a phone call away to the techs of Jim Henson's Creature Shop, based

on location. “So we know on the next morning when they go on-set, they're pretty much as good as they're going to be for shooting,” said Barton. “It's my duty to stay after the shooting's finished to make sure everything's working. When I leave, everything is ready to go for the first thing in the morning. We had to initiate a night service crew on the first film. We tried it and it worked so well that it seemed stupid not to do it this year.”

Barton is also a mechanical designer and was in charge of building the operator boxes used for the sequel. He finished by saying, “When I finish with all the mechanical stuff, I turn it over to the ‘scumblers.’” They paint and repair the outside of the head.

“It's really such a major thing,” said Barton of the film's use of animatronics. “I don't think people really

appreciate what it takes to get four characters like that on the stage. You tend to just see the four characters and that's it. You don't see all the suits, all the spares, all the stuff. Things get ripped on the set, the inevitable happens. It's a constant sort of—not struggle—it's a constant *battle* to keep on top of it.”

Gary L. Wood

Sweat-filled Turtle heads are dried at the end of each shooting day, called “giving the Turtles a blow job.”



TURTLES II

THE ACTORS IN THE SUITS

An inside view on life as one of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, a tale of blood, sweat and tears—but mostly sweat.

By Gary L. Wood

"I thought I was in shape," said ex-Olympic gymnast Mark Caso of his physical condition before taking the role of the Turtles' unofficial leader Leonardo in *TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II*. "Then I found out I *wasn't* in shape."

Beneath the foam and electronics that we see on the screen are four actors giving everything they have—blood, sweat, and tears—especially sweat—to bring the Turtles to life. Caso was a gymnast who became a quadriplegic when he injured his neck in a fall but refused to accept his doctors' predictions that he would never walk again. Caso's introduction to the Turtles' world of animatronic acting and foam rubber suits began, much like his fellow performers, with an audition.

"I had four or five auditions before they hired me," said Caso, during filming in November. "They flew me to London to get the body mold done and we had to go back to London at the end of August for the last fitting and some rehearsal. We've been here in North Carolina ever since—seems like an eternity."

Leif Tilden, who plays Donatello, the Turtle gadget whiz, returned to repeat the role he had in the first film. Tilden got the job after a similar audition process, but to this day, doesn't know why. "I have no idea," said Tilden. "It surprised the hell out of me. They said, 'You're perfect for Donatello!' 'Very interesting,' I thought. I went home from that audition kind of reevaluating my existence. It was like, 'I'm perfect for a Turtle. Wow.'"

Michelan Sisti is another returning Turtle from the first



Michelan Sisti, the performer inside Michaelangelo, the Turtle jokester, got to play a cameo role out of costume as a pizza delivery boy in the original.



film, again playing Michaelangelo, the jokester. Sisti also had a small walk-on role in the original as the Domino's Pizza Delivery "Dude" who handed a pizza down through the sewer grate to—who else?—Michaelangelo. Sisti had some Broadway acting experience when he won the job, after three auditions. Sisti said he wasn't surprised to be picked to play Michaelangelo.

"I've been a cut-up all through my life," said Sisti. "Basically that's what primed me as a kid to think that I might have a career in the theatre. Of the four Turtles, Michaelangelo is the clown. He's the one who always has the punchline making light of the situation, which is his way of dealing with whatever problem they have."

Caso said he sees the Turtle ensemble in terms of his own family. "This is like reliving my childhood, growing up with my brothers all over again," said Caso. "You will say something and two of the guys will side against you. The next minute those two guys will split up against another."

All four of the actors were in good physical shape before their hiring. Tilden was an All-American soccer player in 1983. "I've taken gymnastics," he said. "I've a very athletic background so I've sweat before."

Kenn Troum, who plays the angry loner, Raphael, had won the Rebok National Aerobic Championship Southeast Conference. "I was in pretty good shape coming into the show, but physically the costume really starts to wear on you," said Troum. "Regardless of how in shape you are, you're going to get tired. You're going to feel pretty burnt."

Sisti agreed, noting that the costumes' mechanical head in particular becomes quite heavy "especially when you're slightly injured or tired. It gets more and more uncomfortable."

Even with Caso's Olympic background, he admitted, "It was a real shock in the beginning, finding out how much we could take, testing out the suits, how long we could go without air, finding those limitations. But as all four Turtle

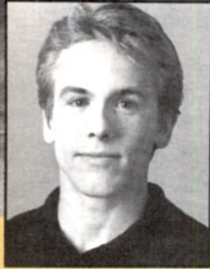
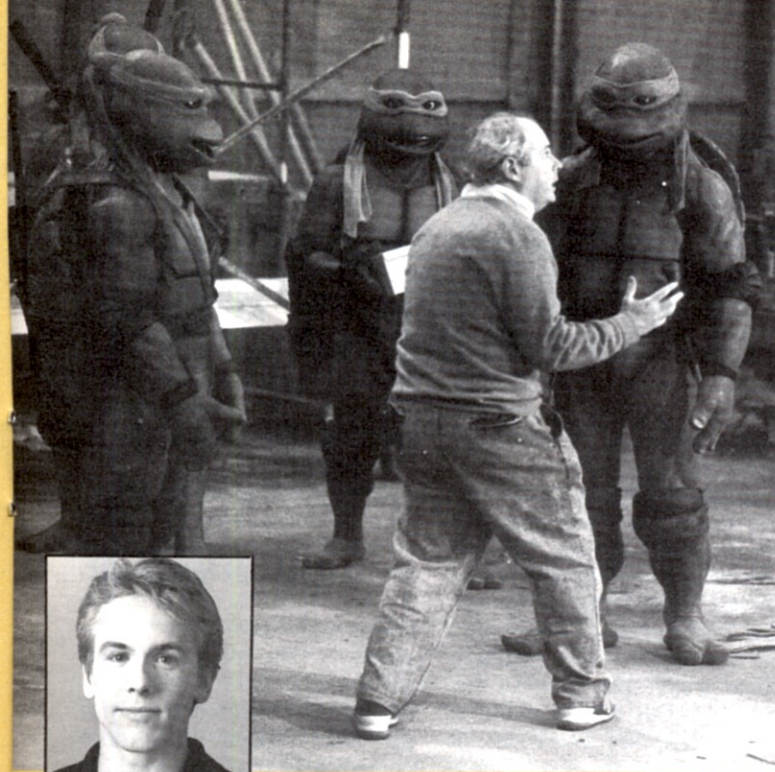
actors would attest, the show must go on and discipline is the key as Caso's Leonardo exemplified. "I think we've been doing twelve hour days," said Caso. "It only got bad for me when I got the flu. You're already hot. You're miserable. And then the flu! At the time we had to do this whole choreographed dance number which meant we weren't going to be breathing any air either. It was the *worst possible* time for this dance number for me." In time, though, Caso said the suit became "lighter for me and a lot easier to play in."

With physical fitness not a problem and adjustment to the suits only a matter of time, the question of martial arts had to be addressed. Tilden had only received martial arts training in "bits and pieces here and there." Only Troum had extensive training. His twelve years of experience got him a job as a stunt Turtle on the first film. Sisti had only stage fighting experience and no martial arts training when he auditioned for the original. "I've always been an athlete and a physical actor," said Sisti. "We specifically requested and were given three months of intensive martial arts training in New York prior to the first film."

With the physical preparation out of the way, the actors were better able to concentrate on their characters. It may be a surprise to the cynics who believe that the extent of each Turtle's personality is limited to the color of mask they wear, but Sisti did quite a bit of research into Michaelangelo (the orange one) for the first film. "I did that by researching with Peter [Laird] and Kevin [Eastman], the creators," said Sisti. "I used the early comic books, the black and white

THE VIEW FROM INSIDE

“It’s hot,” said Turtle actor Leif Tilden, “very hot. We’re soaking wet. But at the same time we’re making these things come to life and be funny and goofy and believable all at once.”



Director Michael Pressman works with the Turtle actors on the stage. Inset: Leif Tilden, who plays Donatello.

ones which also fit into the mood of last year’s picture, which is much darker than this one. This year is much lighter, much more comedy-involved.”

Though specialized stunt Turtles without sophisticated animatronics are used for the film’s more demanding action scenes, the Turtle actors were called upon to do some of their own stunts. “We do a limited amount that the meccy[animatronic] head will allow us to do,” said Sisti. “In fact, I did a fall a couple of times yesterday, a backward fall.” In the scene, Michaelangelo is knocked through a fence by two of Shredder’s ooze-induced mutations. Sisti had to fight seventy pounds of Turtle suit, including the major weight of its battery and computer strapped directly to his back. With that magic word “Action!”, Sisti had to let loose with one massive surge of energy to bring himself to his feet and begin his counterattack.

In this particular instance, though, Sisti admitted that he had only himself to blame for his situation. “Well, it was my idea,” he laughed. “I get up from that fall disoriented and there was a line in the script that I hated. So we did it straight with the line from the script. Then I came up with an alternative which is much

funnier. It involved two variations. One—getting up saying, ‘I’m fine, I’m fine, I’m fine—Taxi!’ and walking out of frame.” The second variation involved the call for a taxi and ended with Mike passing out flat on his back. ‘Boom!’”

In this spirit, despite physical discomfort and fatigue, the four actors dug deep and brought forth creativity from beneath the complaints of heat, sweat, and soreness. Said Tilden, “I don’t look at them as complaints. I think that’s like an outside kind of observer label. What we’re doing is suffering.

“It’s hot,” said Tilden. “It’s very hot. We’re constantly soaking wet, but at the same time we are making these things come to life as much as we can. Making them come to life and be funny, and goofy, and believable. That’s a very complicated thing to do. It takes lots of concentration, and I think there are distractions that maybe make us be perceived as ‘complaining.’ But I think that the focus is to make this movie as good as we can possibly make it.”

Summed up Tilden, “It’s all worth it, completely worth it!—the suffering, the sweat. There’s also a lot of laughing, and creativity, and wild imagination.” □

both heads, both in one area. It just didn’t want to work properly. We put him on Leonardo’s frequency and it was fine. Or if he walked back it was fine. Or if he walked forward it was fine. It was just this one area.”

When space permits, the four Turtles’ puppeteers, one for each Turtle, are located together with their equipment, as they were seen shooting footage on the exterior set of the film’s Dock Shore Club. “This is a luxury,” said Wilson of the scene’s shooting circumstances. Sometimes we have to spread out just because of the cramped circumstances of the set we’re on. And if we encounter interference problems, we just have to spread out.”

All of the Turtles’ puppeteers on the sequel have worked at Henson’s throughout their careers, and have grown up with the great strides made in puppeteering technology. Robert Tygner, who operates Leonardo, worked on the original TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES, operating Splinter, a full puppet rather than a suited actor. Noted Tygner, “Back in the days of LABYRINTH, it took four or five people to operate a puppet. Before that it took up to twelve or thirteen people. Our training has been over the last five years in the development of all this technology on films like LABYRINTH, and THE DARK CRYSTAL. It’s grown up. This is the essence of five years. For instance, the way the Turtles’ lips move comes from LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS.”

Robert Mills, who operates Donatello, finds the recent strides in puppeteering technology amazing. “It was insane to try and coordinate up to twelve people on one character!” said Mills, of the way it used to be done. “We’ve gone a

long way from doing the usual fuzzy bunny rabbits. It’s changed. Now we’re so reliant on the technology. If the slightest thing goes wrong, we can’t do anything. If the nose isn’t working, if the motor goes out, everything has to stop.”

Tygner noted how the art of the puppeteer has evolved with the technology. “We’ve grown into this stuff as it’s been developing to accommodate our needs as performers,” he said. “Everything we want in terms of tools is there now. Getting used to it in rehearsal, or practice, or a shoot, is getting it to the point where it’s second nature. You don’t even have to think about it. Physically your fingers know what to do and where to go to get the expressions. That way you can stop thinking about it and concentrate on the lines.”

Mills pointed out that rehearsals were crucial in delivering a believable Turtle performance on the stage. “I think the trick of all the rehearsals was trying to get to a point

Kenn Troum in action as Raphael, providing the movements necessary to make a Turtle performance believable.



“Kids have a rapport with the Turtles because it’s not like ‘Superman,’” said Ernie Reyes Jr. “It’s easier to relate to them than Clark Kent, a macho, nerd-like character, a real square.”



Lights, camera, animatronics—preparing to film a close-up of Donatello, the gadget whiz, as he delivers a technical monologue on the nature of the ooze.

where we could improvise with a character,” said Mills. “You’ve got two people creating one character, the puppeteer and the actor. After the experience gained in rehearsal, when you’re in front of the camera and something suddenly changes, you can handle it.”

Being able to improvise—almost unheard of in effects work—gives the Turtle actors

inside the suits the degree of freedom necessary to craft a real performance. “There are limitations,” said Leif Tilden, the actor inside Donatello. “But we find ways of overcoming them. We can jump pretty high, we can run pretty fast, we can spin and stuff. It’s just a matter of adjusting to the lack of vision and the immense amount of weight that we have on. Obviously, we can’t do

things that might jeopardize the head or the mechanics. Any kind of slip of any kind could damage the head.”

Stunt Turtles in suits without the complex mechanics do all the risky moves. “Generally, we are not trained martial artists,” said Tilden of his fellow Turtle actors. “That’s why we have these really excellent stunt guys, the best in the country. But we do a lot of action too. We don’t just sit still and move the head. There are several sequences where the actors are doing lots of movements, lots of action and karate moves, as well as gags and bits. This movie is filled with physical humor. It’s like we’re doing the physical humor and the stunt guys are doing the

physical punching. We’re all sweating. The puppeteers are sweating. They have a task all their own.”

Moviemaking itself is a complex business, but, as Tilden pointed out, moviemaking involving the TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES adds a whole new layer of complexity. “The people behind the cameras have a task making a movie *and* working with us,” said Tilden. “It’s more complicated than just working with an actor. They’re dependent on us working and we’re dependent on them working. Getting everything choreographed is a very complicated maze of filmmaking. It makes for very good stuff. The dailies are great!” □

TURTLE TURNS CHARACTER ACTOR

Martial artist actor Ernie Reyes Jr. was a stunt Turtle in the original TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES. In the sequel Reyes sheds his Turtle skin for the role of Keno, friend of the Ninja Turtles, the idea of Golden Harvest producers Tom Gray and David Chan.

“They thought that I did a really good job doing the stunts for Donatello, so they decided that they would like to write me into the script [for the sequel],” said Reyes. “They got approval from [Turtles creators] Eastman and Laird.”

Keno is a pizza delivery boy and talented martial artist who allies himself to the Turtles. “I think the character is going to be very well received by the young kids,” said Reyes, “He’s a human and he’s a kid. I think that’s one reason why kids like the



Former stunt Turtle Ernie Reyes Jr. as Keno.

Turtles so much. They’re young. They talk like they’re crazy. They’re not normal superheroes. Keno is another way they can relate to it.

“I think the whole key to why kids have a real good rapport with the Turtles is because it’s not like SUPERMAN. It’s not like a macho, nerd-like character, a real square. These guys are ordinary. They’re a little bit crazy.

They talk in the lingo that I think kids can relate to. All of those things build a certain rapport. It’s easier to relate to them than Clark Kent.”

Reyes noted he did not miss acting in a Turtle suit. “I’m so glad [to be out of the suit],” he said. “It’s so much work. This time I had less physical work and more fun. [For the first film] we rehearsed for about a month, all the fight scenes. We worked twelve to thirteen-hour days. It was the middle of the summer, and it was really hot. There were a lot of times where we had to do things over and over and over. Which made it really rough. Everybody’s a little tired. You get worn down. It was a rough shoot, but it was fun, too.”

Once out of the suit, Reyes came face-to-face, for the

first time, with a working, talking Ninja Turtle. “It’s really weird,” said Reyes. “They’re so real when you’re working with them—you kind of get dumb-founded looking at them. Sometimes I caught myself just staring at them, into space, when we were supposed to be rehearsing our scenes. But it was great. It’s one of the reasons I like doing movies. You really get into a fantasy world and you get to tell a story. This is like the extreme of fantasy. It was a lot of fun.”

The fun took a pause, though, when Keno took a fall. “I was doing a flip off somebody’s back during a scene and I landed on my back,” said Reyes of being injured on the sequel. “It wasn’t that bad. I had to go to the hospital for a little bit. . . . I take off the suit to make things easier, and I get hurt!”

Gary L. Wood

TURTLES II

BRIAN HENSON ON THE CREATURE SHOP

Taking stock of the Turtles' success and the future of puppet animatronics.

By Gary L. Wood

When Limelight Productions hired Jim Henson Productions to bring the TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES to life in a full-length feature film—complete with the promotional tag line, “This is no cartoon, Dude”—they were attempting to do what many had failed to do in the past. They were going to bring cartoon characters to life through animatronics and expect audiences to relate to them in a way that they hadn't in Henson's own DARK CRYSTAL, LABRYINTH, and especially George Lucas' HOWARD THE DUCK.

The work of the Creature Shop did the trick and made the Turtles a \$130 million-plus, animatronic hit. Shortly after the completion of TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES II, Brian Henson, puppeteer and director of the company, noted that the success of the Turtles has kept the Henson Creature Shop together after the sudden, unexpected death of his father last year. And the know-how gained by the Creature Shop in doing two Turtles features will be put to use next in creating the animatronic leads in DINOSAURS, a comedy adventure in the Turtles mold produced by Henson for ABC.

Henson gave a lot of credit for the phenomenal success of the first Turtles film to the popularity of the characters created by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird. “We can take a lot of credit for the success of the Turtles,” said Henson. “But we can't take credit for that.” Henson noted that the Creature Shop stuck closely to the concept and design of the original comic book characters. “Eastman and Laird obviously had approval [on the animatronic design],” said Henson. “We were trying to stay faithful to *their* designs. The changes made were all subtle, anatomical adjustments, because they were going to be people in

costumes. We just worked off of their sketches and artwork. The Turtles were much heavier [in the early comic books]. We made them a bit heavier than they are in the cartoons, and a little bit older, but we didn't go as far as Eastman and Laird did in their earlier stuff.”

The innovation the Creature Shop brought to the original film was to devise computerized radio-controlled servomotor mechanisms by which just one suited actor and one puppeteer could improvise a performance. “Because the computers are so easy to program, they can be working out the performance ten minutes beforehand,” said Henson. “They can always be changing it. That's really the wonderful part about it.”

The Creature Shop Turtles system has been improved by leaps and bounds for the sequel, but Henson noted, “Even the first film was hugely refined from what anybody else was doing. Most [competitors] would have done a Turtle with 35 cables hanging out through a hole in the back of the suit with fifteen puppeteers on the end of the cables. Right from the beginning, we

Mark Caso as Leonardo and Kenn Troum as Raphael, mugging for the camera, waiting on the set for a take. Caso tries to rest the head's heavy animatronics.



Henson helps puppeteer a shot of Splinter from the original TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES.

realized we couldn't do that. These were athletic *youths*. They couldn't have any cables hanging out of them. They're the stars of the movie. You can't have fifteen puppeteers because for fifteen puppeteers to perform a character in a scene, they really need a week to rehearse. To get all those people working in perfect sync with one another is a complicated and painstaking process. So we developed a system so that the character could be performed by just the person in the suit and one puppeteer. [With this system] they could virtually *improvise*, which is *unheard of* in the animatronic field.”

All this, combined with respect for the characters, is what separates the Henson Ninja Turtles from the likes of the HOWARD THE DUCK. “I think there's a real problem in the industry with animatronics in that everybody thinks they're *props!*” observed Henson. “And they treat them as props. We work much more from the basis of ‘How do you make a character *work* like an actor would?’ That's what you *have* to do to get a character that will read on screen.”

Henson said the Creature Shop technicians plan to make further refinements in the art of animatronic acting for DINOSAURS, their 30 minute ABC series to debut in April, a saurian's-eye-view of history. Said Henson, “We're pushing the system ahead for that. There are a few developments that we're putting in to take it a step further.” □

TURTLES II

THE MAKING OF THE NINJA TURTLE SUITS

Henson's Creature Shop behind-the-scenes, forging comic book characters with realism.

By Gary Wood

"It's seventy pounds of heat, noise, and pain," said Turtle actor Michelan Sisti of the Michaelangelo costume he has worn for both TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE films. According to Sisti, it's like bedlam inside the head of a Turtle. "You hear all the motors," he said. "You hear the common radio feed which has all the puppeteers speaking, and you hear yourself as well."

Sisti and the rest of the Turtle actors are only a small part of what it takes to insure that the Turtle suits perform well. The costumes are made in London, the home base of Jim Henson's Creature Shop operation. William Plant is Henson shop supervisor and oversaw the work done for the sequel. Plant noted that the creation of a Turtle begins with the sculpting of a small maquette in clay, based on design drawings. "It gives the director, or anybody else with artistic input, a chance to actually look at the thing from various angles," said Plant.

Once each Turtle design is finalized, a full-size version is sculpted in clay onto a life cast of the performer to be inside, insuring a perfect fit. The suits are cast in pieces out of foam rubber, injected into molds made from the sculpt, and baked. "We use a green-base color [for the foam]," said Plant. "If the suit gets nicked or scratched during a take, we don't have this glaring piece of white or yellow foam screaming through from underneath



Leif Tilden as Donatello is readied on the set for filming by Henson dresser Day Murch.

the paint. You might save a shot because of it."

When the foam comes out of the mold it has "flash" lines all around where the mold joins together. The "flash" lines are cut off and those areas are repaired through a process called "scumbling," named for the latex mousse used, called "scumble," which serves much like body putty does in fixing a car. The "flash" lines are saved for major repairs that may be required later during filming.

Skins for the animatronic "meccy" heads are combined with a skeleton that holds the mechanics. The skins are painted and textured to add detail. "One of the problems we had during the first film was getting the color right," said Plant. "What looked good to the naked eye was actually too blue or yellow for the camera." The paint used is latex-based,

specially mixed to prevent cracking when dry or when the Turtle suit stretches during movement.

Plant's Creature Shop crew prepared a total of 55 Turtle suits for the sequel—including both stunt and animatronic outfits. Each suit is worn for only half a day during filming. At lunch breaks, suits are handed back to a Creature Shop unit on location for repair, and a fresh suit is donned. "You can see that some of these are just ripped to high hell," said Henson head suit painter Hans Gilsdorf, pointing to ravaged suits in the service shop on location. "That's just from six hours of wear. They just fall apart. That's the way this foam is. It's not designed or made for multiple wear."

The shooting day begins in the morning as the actors put on their cotton undergarments. "It's a full-body cotton suit," said Plant. "From that point, we take them to half-stage dress which takes about ten minutes. That involves putting on the lower parts, the legs and the chest parts." Plant noted that the legs, from knee to waist, are a one-piece garment with over-the-shoulder suspenders. The torso, which includes the arms only to the elbow, is much like "a waistcoat in reverse" that laces up the back. The stomach area, which will be hidden by the Turtles "chest shell" is made of ventilating mesh. The lacing in the back is hidden by the large shell. The hands are simply gloves which cover the whole forearm up to the elbow. Likewise, the feet and calves are



In the Creature Shop on location at the Carolco Studios, Hans Gilsdorf touches up the suit for Raphael. Inset: A stand of Troum's life cast on the set, used for Michelan Sisti.

covered up to the knee. The elbow and knee joints are laced to the suit's upper parts and are conveniently hidden by the decorative elbow and knee pads, which are trademarks of the Ninja Turtles. Plant called the pads and shells "very convenient" in hiding the joints and lacings.

When the crew breaks for lunch, the Turtles head back to the Creature Shop and undress. "They can't put a wet costume back on as you can imagine," said Plant. "They must perspire about six pounds [of sweat]. If you really think about it, the latex acts like a big sponge." The wet suits are turned over to the Creature

Left: After six hours of animatronic action the Turtle suits are turned over to the Creature Shop. Right: Henson costume technician Greg Neff bakes inside a makeshift oven, an insulated wood box.



CREATURE CRAFTSMANSHIP

“One of the problems we had during the first film was getting the color right,” said shop supervisor William Plant. “What looked good to the naked eye was actually too blue or yellow.”



At the Creature Shop studio in North Carolina, Henson suit painter Michaelangelo is shown working on a life cast of actor Kenn Troom. A wooden stand is used to hold the costume's head during breaks.



Shop and the actors hit the showers before going to lunch. After an afternoon of shooting in a fresh suit, the Creature Shop gets another worn suit to repair.

“We do sixteen costumes a day,” said Henson costume technician Greg Neff. “That’s two for each of the four actors and two each for the stunt people. They wear them and the legs rub together, the paint comes off, they start splitting. What we do then is take a little acetone bath to clean the paint off, we mix *scumble*, and fill them in . . . I’m under the listing of costume technician but we call ourselves *scumblers*.” The repaired sections—estimat-

ed by Plant to be well over 100 pieces per day—are stuck in a makeshift oven, an insulated wooden closet with heat lamps on the floor.

“We stick them in the oven for an hour or two depending on how much we had to do to it,” said Neff. “It comes back out to the rack and people will paint it, powder it, and then put it on the ready rack so when the Turtles come in they’ll be waiting for them.”

The painters are supplied with actual life casts of the actors and stunt people. When they receive a suit, they determine whose suit it is. For example, if they are to repair a Leonardo “meccy” suit, they must grab the life cast of actor Mark Caso. “They go on their own forms,” said Neff. “That’s how we make the repairs. It helps stretch out and hold the costume open.”

Added Gilsdorf, “We have had some suits that have been retired. What we do is put them on the prop Turtles, the dummy Turtles that are to be thrown around. We’ll *scumble* them completely, which makes them a little more durable.”

The suits are sent to the Creature Shop for repair. Technicians check to see if repaired Turtle parts are done in a wooden closet equipped with normal heat lamps.



Though the suits have been improved for the sequel in a number of ways, the major innovation of the Creature Shop has been to completely redesign the animatronics of the “meccy” heads. “It would have been easy to go with what we had last year,” said Plant. “but we actually chucked everything and started again.” On the original, the “meccy” heads were driven by push-pull cables, gear-driven much like a bicycle cable by motors in the backpack. “We had 27 steel cables running up the neck, joined in a bunch that was two, two and a half inches in diameter,” said Plant of the old heads. “Even though it was sort of flexible, it restricted head movements.”

The servo motors for the newly designed “meccy” heads are in the head itself, including the electronic circuit boards to control the servos. The only connection between the head and backpack is an umbilical feed connecting the head mechanics to a battery, computer, and radio receiver/transmitter underneath the shell. “It’s purely an electrical feed,” said Plant of the streamlined connection. “And the head weighs *exactly* the same as last year’s,” reflecting a streamlining of the mechanisms themselves.

Another suit innovation on the sequel is a water-cooled vest for the comfort of the actors. “I had one designed by the company that made the Skylab and Apollo suits,” said Plant. “It’s very thin. When the Turtles are not performing they can go to the Turtle-cooler and plug in. It’s controlled so there’s no shock to their system. We also put fans in the head this year.”

All the efforts and refinements of the Creature Shop merely act to support those who actually have to move, think, and act within the confines of the foam. Kenn Troom,

the actor who plays Raphael in the sequel, served as the stunt Turtle for Raphael on the first film and has a good perspective from the inside of both suits. “They’re both physically demanding but in different ways,” said Troom. “In the stunt suits, you are actually doing some good physical work, though the suits are *slightly* more comfortable inside. The acting suits—the “meccy” Turtles—we don’t really get too exerted, but we sweat a tremendous amount during the day from sheer heat. We breath our own carbon dioxide. So by the end of the day we’re *all* exhausted, but it’s through different means.

“The stunt Turtles have everything we do except the mechanics,” continued Troom. “They don’t have a backpack under their shell, nor do they have any servos in their head. Which means their costumes are about 25 to 30 pounds lighter than ours. Both jobs have their advantages because it’s a lot of fun. But I enjoy acting because that’s what I like.” □

Michaelangelo’s Turtle head from the original, showing the neck’s bulky cable feed and the backpack’s animatronics.



12:01 P.M.

Director Jonathan Heap made Richard Lupoff's story a genre mini-masterpiece.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Jonathan Heap, one of 19 finalists competing to direct a small film with major clout in Hollywood, was handed several pages of random, virtually incoherent dialogue with no character or scene headings. Instructed he could not rewrite any of it, Heap was given a video camera, and told to come back at the end of the day with the edited footage.

"It was dialogue like, 'What are you doing?,' 'Give me that!' 'Oh, no!,' 'Open the door,' and 'What's out there?'" recalled the 32-year-old filmmaker. "It made no sense at all." Heap's solution? "I set it in an insane asylum."

Directing Smith in the traffic circle that opens and closes the tragic time loop story of Heap's 30-minute short.



Kurtwood Smith, the memorable villain of *ROBOCOP*, displays amazing versatility with his moving portrayal of Myron Castleman, a quiet little man trapped by the banality of his life.

The ploy worked. Heap became one of six would-be filmmakers commissioned by the prestigious "Discovery Project" to direct a half-hour motion picture that would be seen by the same crowd of producers, directors and agents who scout for talent at the major cinema schools and film festivals.

Heap's contribution was a riveting science fiction film called *12:01 P.M.*, which he based on a short story by San Francisco-based author and talk show host Richard Lupoff, telecast last fall on cable's Showtime. *ROBOCOP*'s Kurtwood Smith stars as a hapless wimp doomed to repeat the same hour of his life over and over, due to a glitch in the space/time continuum called a "time bounce." *12:01 P.M.* won widespread critical accolades, and opened the hitherto impenetrable caverns of Hollywood to Heap as if he were some latter day Ali Baba.

stances.

Each year, after a rigorous selection process, a tiny group of fledgling filmmakers is given the bartered services of an impressive array of top-notch Hollywood production and acting talent sometimes worth (some say) a cool million. To make their short, but otherwise feature-quality motion pictures, the filmmakers are also given an actual budget of some \$35,000 to cover the cost of crew who might not benefit by association with the project as well as craft services, catering and other direct expenses.

The Discovery program was established three years ago by erstwhile Columbia Pictures head David Putnam, together with associates Jonathan Sanger and Jana Sue Memal. Its mandate was to afford individuals already at work within the film industry a crack at directing, under the assumption that intolerably few qualified people would ever get such a chance under normal circum-

stances. Heap, a native of Greenwich, Connecticut, had already gone the film school route at Ithaca College of New York. His thesis film in fact landed him a deal with independent producer David Picker, who hired Joel and Ethan Coen (*MILLER'S CROSSING*) to write a thriller based on Heap's premise of a family harboring a murderer known only to one of the children. The project was pitched at Warner Bros, where

Heap directs Laura Harrington as the pretty young girl Smith longs to approach.



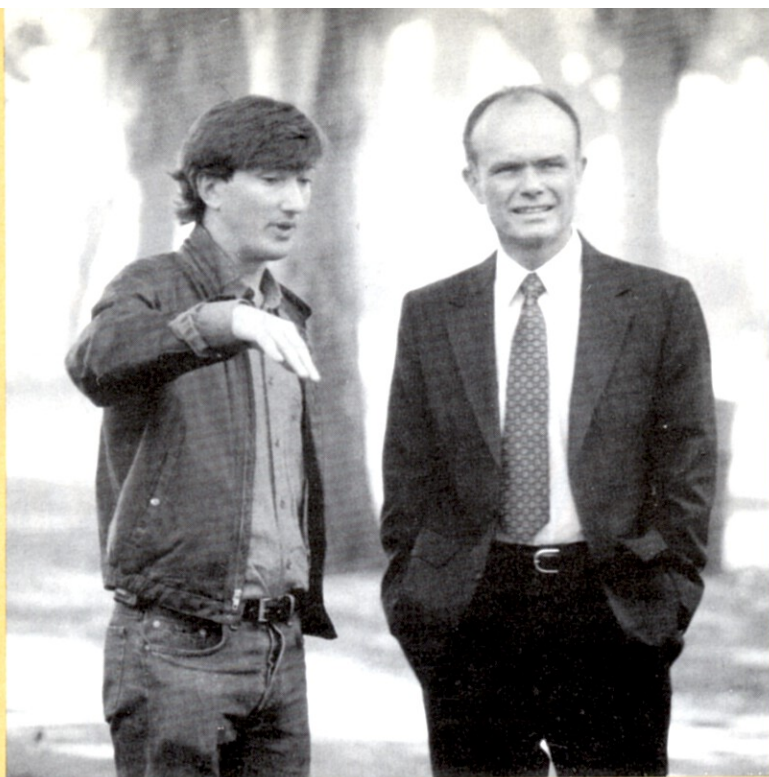
Mark Rosenberg commissioned Heap, with associate Phillip Morton, to develop and, ultimately, direct the film. Rosenberg finally took the project to Mirage Productions, a company he had formed with director Sidney Pollack. Heap and Morton did another rewrite, but the project never quite jelled. Heap noted, however, that in the wake of his success with *12:01 P.M.*, the project is back under consideration at Warners.

It was during his sojourn in development hell that Heap applied to the Discovery Project for a director's gig. Turned down the first time, he came back with a screenplay based upon a Richard Lupoff story he had read in an issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* during the early '70s, when he was fourteen. Heap had secured Lupoff's permission to adapt the story as a screenplay, indicating that if chosen, the Discovery Project would secure legal rights to the story. Lupoff agreed happily.

When asked by the Discovery committee to describe his take on the story, Heap pitched it as a straightforward science fiction story with little in the way of complex character development, a nightmare in which Myron Castleman, a quiet, unreflective, routine-bound man, literally becomes trapped by the banality of his life. The film opens at 12:01 p.m. with Castleman encircled in street traffic as he walks to the park to eat lunch. One hour later, Castleman finds himself back where he began at 12:01 p.m., ready to repeat the same hour endlessly in a loop that only he is aware of.

"The time bounce permits him to realize how he's been living," said Heap. "It gives him a chance to realize, with each successful reconstitution in the traffic circle, a little bit more about himself. In the end, he finally takes action. Of course by then, it's too late."

Heap said that Kurtwood Smith agreed to play Castleman because the role offered the actor a departure from the



Heap directs Smith in Lafayette Park, reliving the same hour over for the fortieth time, a low-tech approach to science fiction that won Heap an Oscar nomination for "Best Short."

“The Discovery Program, a non-profit organization devoted to developing new directing talent, lavished Heap with top-notch Hollywood production and acting talent estimated by some to be worth a cool million.”

villainous characters he had been depicting so often. "Kurtwood and I talked a lot about the character," recalled Heap. "Castleman was passionless. He had never created a good relationship with a woman. He was very introspective, more of an observer than a partaker."

"I didn't want the guy to be a nerd, someone who was bowed over and defeated. But he has to think he's together and organized when he's really not. He's been through this bounce maybe forty times, but it hasn't awakened him enough to cause him to be angry."

Heap's script was chosen in July, 1989. But production was not slated to begin until November. Heap used the time propitiously, commissioning a rewrite by well-known Hollywood writer Stephen Tolkin, who also scripted the unreleased *CAPTAIN AMERICA*. "I had a vision of what I wanted," recalled Heap, "but felt a little limited in realizing it. My script was a little thin on establishing the theme that the

time-bounce was a metaphor for Myron's life, and his developing awareness, emotionally. Another writer, I thought, could deepen and enrich the story."

One of the more interesting changes in plot had to do with the manner of Castleman's eventual, ostensible demise. In the Lupoff story, the character succumbs, at the end, to a fatal heart attack—one which does not, however, provide him with the expected surcease from interminable time-hopping. Jonathan Sanger suggested that Heap have his character shoot himself. "He felt the audience might cheer him on just to get some relief," said Heap. "This fit very nicely with my theme of a man who is actionless taking action."

Preproduction began in early October, 1989. Locations were found within greater Los Angeles, notably downtown near the Hotel Bonaventure, in Lafayette Park, and at a reclamation plant in the Valley. Much of that time was devoted

to developing the one special effect in the film—the time bounce. "I wanted the bounce to be almost a rebirth," said Heap. "Each time Myron goes through it, he gets sucked into the darkness and is then shot out through a white light and colors, popping into the street. I wanted it to be violent, explosive and disruptive."

Heap had initially envisioned something akin to the experience depicted in the TV show *QUANTUM LEAP*. But that would have cost big bucks, and the San Fernando Valley company that agreed to do his effects, R. & B., was working for nothing. Within the limits of reason, however, the company did not stint. It devised an effect based upon the use of different colored gels, requiring five camera passes, each taking eight hours to complete. Heap was delighted with the result.

Heap shot the film in six days in November 1989, for the most part on schedule and within budget. Heap said his toughest challenge was staging the repeated scenes in Lafayette Park, filmed from various vantage points, using mostly untrained talent. Recent screenings on the festival circuit have included a showing at the U. S. Film Festival in Park City, Utah, last January.

Perhaps Heap's biggest surprise was the reception accorded his little film, including an Oscar nomination for "Best Live-Action Short." Heap had initially felt his film might be a bit slow, particularly during the first half, when nothing much happens beyond Castleman having lunch with a pretty young woman, warmly played by Laura Harrington, whom the shy Castleman has longed to approach.

Audiences didn't agree. In fact, at one screening, after Castleman had done a manly job of blowing his brains out, only to reappear, seconds later, alive and despairing, in his traffic circle, the audience applauded. "I guess they felt it was the right way to end it," said Heap. □

OMEN IV

THE AWAKENING

20th Century Fox flogs its Biblical horror franchise for a final TV movie installment.

By Robin Brunet

On a chilly, late-January morning in Vancouver's Stanley Park near the IT sewer-system location, producer Harvey Bernhard supervised the fiery climax of *OMEN IV—THE AWAKENING*, which is scheduled for a 90 minute May 10 airing on the Fox television network. The genial Bernhard was satisfied with the cluster of wood-frame canvas stalls that comprised an outdoor Psychic Fair through which the new Antichrist (Toronto child actress Asia Vieira) would wander, leaving death and destruction in her wake. Three major fire gags, various explosions, and total obliteration of the set had to be filmed before sundown. One hundred and fifty extras were coached by director Jorge Montesi and local stunt coordinator Danny Virtue. Localeffects man Gary Paller and firemen rechecked the hidden propane nozzles and electrical wiring. The complexity of the shoot made it look more like a feature project.

"I'm doing this only to prove a point," said Bernhard, who produced the original 1976 film and two sequels for Fox. "In this era of \$30-50 million budgets, it's still possible to make a picture that looks like \$16 million for \$4.5 million if you have the proper talent. Local talent like Paller, Virtue, special makeup effects man Tibor Farkas and others have



A ghostly chorus in the Fox TV movie to air in May, makeup by Tibor Farkas.

knocked themselves out to deliver."

Bernhard preferred not to discuss the storyline of the new sequel, especially how it ties-in with the original film directed by Richard Donner, or the sequels *DAMIEN—OMEN II* (1978) and *THE FINAL CONFLICT* (1981), which depicted the rise and fall of the Antichrist as foretold in the Bible. Bernhard's way of promoting *OMEN IV*, apart from its budget merits, is to talk about its action sequences.

"If you have six or seven

wonderful action scenes that appear every ten minutes and you leave off a high, you've got a success," said Bernhard, referring to the series trademark of dispatching victims of the Antichrist in ingenious ways. The mayhem dreamed up by Bernhard this time around includes a beheading "that tops the one in the first picture," a wrecking ball death, an impaling, a murder in a snakepit, and the big setpiece, the immolation of the Psychic Fair. Shot in and around Vancouver, the grisly action attracted crowds

and local press. Bernhard suggested the quality of the footage could prompt Fox to postpone the television premiere of *OMEN IV* in favor of a theatrical release (in any event, Fox will release the film theatrically overseas).

Bernhard declined to discuss early production problems on *OMEN IV* that saw the departure of its original director, Dominique Othenin-Girard (*HALLOWEEN V*). Othenin-Girard left the production after just two weeks of filming last December because of what Bernhard termed "creative differences," and was replaced by Montesi, a prolific Vancouver television director who has worked on such shows as *BOOKER* and *21 JUMP STREET*.

On the set Montesi and D.O.P. Mark Fuhrer (*LORD OF THE FLIES*) were observed shooting Paller and Virtue's full-body burn effect for stuntman David Jacox. Rehearsals were intense and quickly refined. Paller's crew readied themselves with blankets and fire extinguishers, and Jacox's hair and sweatsuit were brushed with fire gel. On cue, Jacox backed into a fire-tossing juggler, ignited, and weaved through scurrying extras.

Stunt coordinator Virtue, himself a producer (the new *NEON RIDER* TV series), praised Bernhard for the creative atmosphere he fostered. "He's allowing us to prove



In a replay of the formula, Faye Grant and Michael Woods cradle their adopted daughter, an ill omen from nun Megan Leitch.

what we can do, and in that respect OMEN IV is somewhat of a showcase for us," said Virtue. "Many of the effects—like a stuntman taking actual snakebites on his bare arms—are unique."

Bernhard was fortunate to have gotten a seasoned crew willing to tackle his project. Vancouver, once vaunted as a cost-saving location has become expensive, and Bernhard couldn't afford more experienced local talent given his tight (36-day) schedule and meager budget. "Paller, Virtue, Farkas, and their assistants, are just as good as the better-known local names and perhaps more motivated to do their utmost," said Bernhard, who credited production manager Michelle Maclaren for bringing the crew to his attention. "I don't know what I'd have done otherwise. Since December 13 we've had the rottenest luck weather-wise, and we've got just four weeks from the end of principal photography for music and effects."

"The shooting has been very tight to say the least," agreed makeup supervisor Farkas (FRIDAY 13TH PART 8, XTRO 2). "We had only two weeks to prep, and since then it's been a matter of everybody trying to keep up with everyone else." Farkas and three assistants provided Bernhard with a decapitated head prosthetic, phony snakes to compliment the thirty bull snakes handled

by animal coordinator Deborah Coe, and makeup for a handstabbing sequence. "For the climax involving Michael Learner we needed to build a full-size detailed duplicate of the actor, but the schedule was so rushed he was still in L.A. when the duplicate was required, and we had to do the job using photographs of him.

"It's a challenge to deliver quality work under these conditions," said Farkas of the shoot's limitations. "Also, Mr. Bernhard doesn't want to see blood in the effects. It's almost impossible to do an acceptable decapitation without blood, so we couldn't resist sneaking in just a little before the cameras rolled."

As for weather, Washington state resident Bernhard chose temperate Vancouver for the shoot and was stunned when three of the worst blizzards in history hit the city in rapid succession. "The entire province was crippled, and we don't have adequate snow clearing trucks, let alone sand or salt to make the city streets driveable," explained Maclaren. "But we pushed, skidded and struggled to each location without missing a day! We rescheduled the building of the Psychic Fair until a team of park attendants had dug the area clear of snow four feet deep."

Typical Omen luck? Perhaps. The production weathered other serious mishaps.

"On the first day of shooting an experienced stuntman, falling only fifteen feet from a fire escape into a dumpster, missed his mark and crushed his knee against the dumpster's rim," said Bernhard. "I had a funny feeling about that stunt."

One blizzard-raging morning forced the crew to shoot inside a downtown church, where Bernhard noted he was plagued with a similar foreboding. He stepped out the back door for a breather, and was confronted with the address of an office building looming over the church: 666 Burrard Street. The three sixes figure prominently in the Bible's tale of the Antichrist. "Some of these stories made local headlines," said Bernhard. "I'll admit they make for effective publicity, but they happened nonetheless, as they have on every Omen picture, unfortunately."

The last Psychic Fair fire effect before the set's ultimate destruction turned out to be a shocker for the crew. A kitchen gallery had been rigged to short-circuit and explode. Three cameras and their operators were covered in asbestos blankets, and although everybody had been ordered well behind safety markers, they craned their necks for a good view. On cue various stuntmen were set ablaze and hit their marks. Effects man Paller triggered a switch that sent sparks flying and suddenly the set was

engulfed in a titanic red and black fireball. The accompanying blast of heat made everyone duck for cover—but it wasn't another Omen mishap, despite the mushroom cloud that rose high above the Vancouver park location.

Amidst applause for Paller's fireball, Bernhard revealed that OMEN IV will be the capper for the series. "I won't be doing any more sequels," said Bernhard succinctly, looking ahead to post-production in L.A. to add a score by composer Jerry Goldsmith and sound effects by Chuck Campbell. □

Asia Vieira as the Antichrist in skirts, a Biblically solemn PROBLEM CHILD.



ROBOCOP III

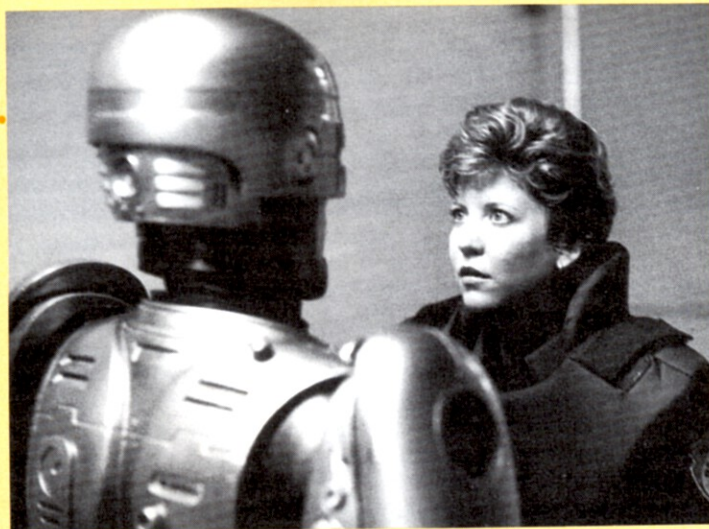
Director Fred Dekker takes control of Orion's would-be science fiction franchise.

By Dan Persons

It was as if an imposter had invaded America's theatres. The ads said it was a sequel to ROBOCOP, the credits even boasted the same stars and much of the same production team. Yet anyone who sat through ROBOCOP 2 soon realized that this was no fit follow-up to the inventively sardonic first film. And anyone who managed to read author Frank Miller's original treatment for the sequel—with its stark mood and dark intimations of genocide and class warfare—knew that what wound up on screen came nowhere near what had been planned on paper.

Given that the sequel received almost universal pans from the critics and less than impressive support from fans at the boxoffice, it would be understandable if those who run Orion Pictures had decided to pull Robo's battery pack and prop him up in a remote corner of a backlot somewhere. Instead, with one eye no doubt on the legions of young RoboCop fans (and all those allowance dollars available for action figures and comic books), Orion has decided to take the original concept Miller devised for ROBOCOP 2, and shift it over to the upcoming ROBOCOP 3. In the new sequel, RoboCop turns in his police badge, and joins an underground army of blue collar rebels fighting to win back Detroit's neighborhoods from the

Dekker, director of the underrated NIGHT OF THE CREEPS (1986) and THE MONSTER SQUAD (1987).



Nancy Allen returns as Officer Lewis, facing Robert Burke, a new actor in the RoboSuit, in adventures designed for a PG-13 rating, set to open in November.

corporate raiders who have "bought" the city.

Unlike the previous entry, ROBOCOP 3 sees many changes in front line personnel. Jon Davison, producer of the first two films, has stepped down, admitting that he "had been with ol' Robo a little too long." Replacing him as producer is Pat Crowley, with Fred Dekker taking over as director as well as receiving co-author credit for his revisions to Miller's script. Dekker is the director of THE MONSTER SQUAD (1987) and the clever, underrated NIGHT OF THE CREEPS (1986).

As for those appearing in front of the camera, actor Peter Weller has declined to don the RoboSuit again, citing scheduling conflicts—including upcoming work in David Cronenberg's adaptation of William Burroughs' THE NAKED LUNCH, and an opportunity to direct his own feature. Taking Weller's place is actor, karate expert, mime artist and screen newcomer Robert Burke. Nancy Allen is back, once again playing the role of Officer Lewis, this time more extensively involved in the action as opposed to her peripheral appearance in the previous film. Returning production personnel include RoboSuit designer Rob Bottin, stop-motion animator Phil Tippett, effects production designer Craig Davies, and RoboMovement trainer and mime artist Moni Yakim.

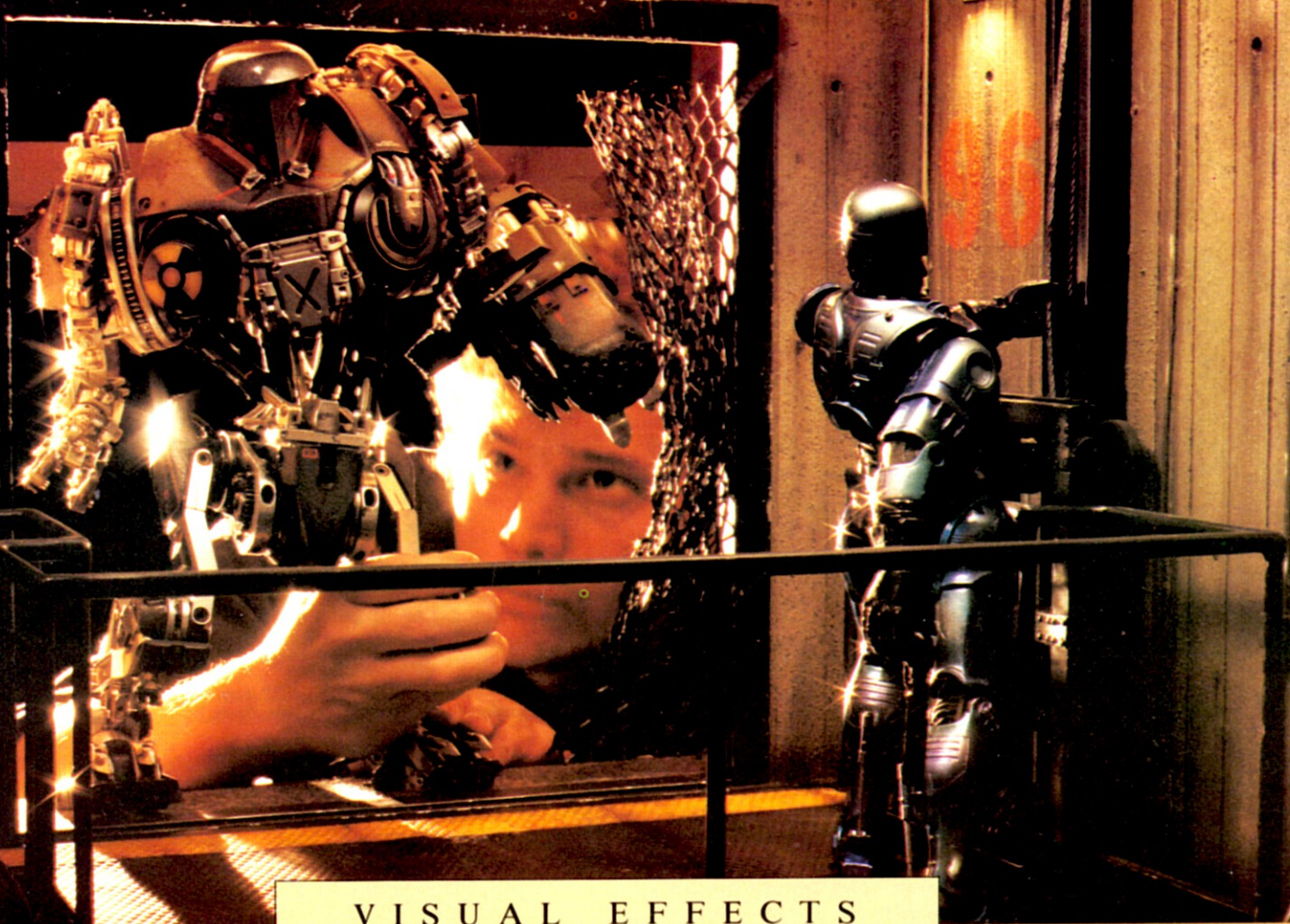
• Speaking from his Los Angeles office prior to going on location in Atlanta, Georgia (this episode's stand-in for Detroit, after #1's Dallas and #2's Houston), Dekker promised that, though the film will be produced under a restricted budget that precludes such show-stopping effects as Phil Tippett's last-act Clash of the Cyborgs for ROBOCOP 2, the third installment should see the series' return to the humor and human values of the Paul Verhoeven original, without necessarily mimicking the Dutch director's zeal for larger-than-life gore.

"You know," said Dekker, "Verhoeven is a very visceral director, and the first movie is really terrific. But it was rated X when it was first turned in, because he just sort of jumps into that stuff, rolls up his sleeves, and goes for it. And I think the second film, to a degree, did that sort of thing, owing in large part to the fact that it was in the first movie, and not that it was at all organic to the material. What I'm really bringing to the party are the themes and the stuff from the first film that we love: real nasty villains, a real satiric sense of the world, and a lot of fun, comic book action—popcorn movie stuff—without going so far that it's too political or too overdone."

Dekker's reason for backing away from the violence is simple. "Orion wants to make a PG-13 movie as opposed to an R movie," he said. "There are a lot of fans of RoboCop who are little kids, who are fans of the TV series, and they're really excluded from the world of Robo. So what we're attempting to do with this one is make it a little more accessible to a wider audience. For that reason, there'll be no less action, just less violence."

Dekker professed no disappointment in losing Weller as lead, stating that Burke was the first and best choice as replacement. "Considering the budget restrictions, in order to make a picture with all the production values we want, we stood to not lose as much money as we would

continued on page 60



VISUAL EFFECTS

ROBOCOP II

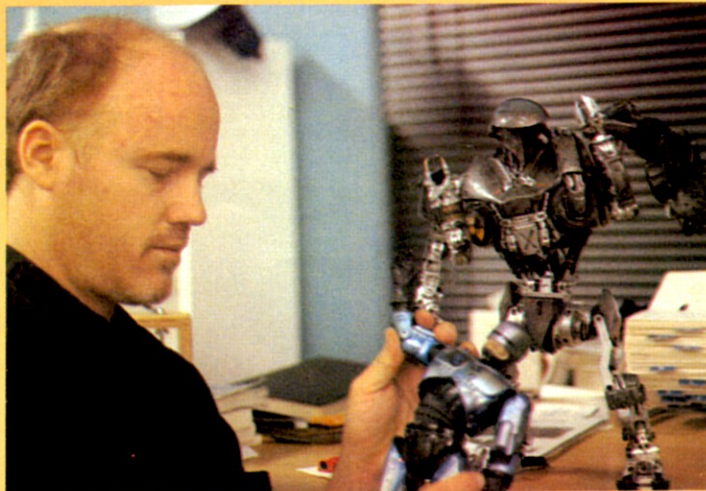
By Lawrence French

ROBOCOP 2 featured more stop-motion animation than any film in recent memory, but failed to garner an Oscar nomination for its effects supervisor Phil Tippett. Nominated previously for WILLOW (1988), and an Oscar-winner for RETURN OF THE JEDI (1983), effects maestro Tippett found ROBOCOP 2 to be his toughest assignment to date. Due to a self-imposed Summer 1990 release date by producer/distributor Orion Pictures, it was necessary to build eight stop-motion puppets of the film's elaborate "Cain monster" (see sidebar, page 43).

"With eight different crews, working sixteen hour days, it was very difficult maintaining contact," said Tippett. "I'm used to doing a lot of the work myself, with maybe one or two crews. Here, we had twenty different set-ups going at once, and coordinating everything was so logistically complex, that it took up most of my time." For comparison, Tippett said he was allotted about the same amount of time to do

Phil Tippett on bringing the RoboAction to life with stop-motion magic.

Oscar-winner Tippett, in his San Francisco-based effects studio, with stop-motion puppets of RoboCop and RoboCop 2, carrying on the tradition of Ray Harryhausen.



Animator Eric Leighton positions the model of RoboCop 2, dubbed the "Cain monster," as it closes in on RoboCop.

the approximately twenty animation shots for DRAGON-SLAYER (1981). The total shots needed on ROBOCOP 2 would come to over 160!

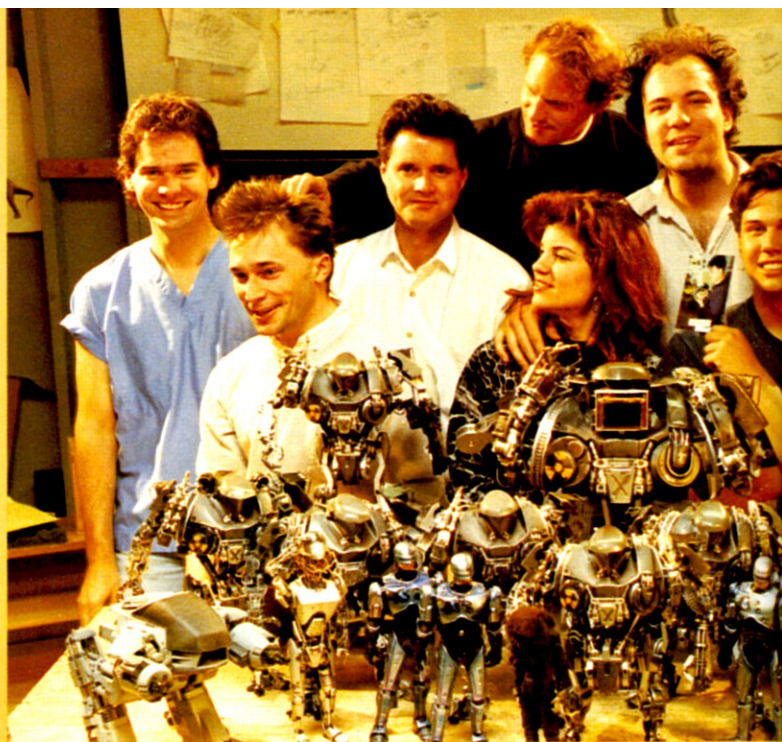
"Luckily we had very experienced crews," said Tippett. "We all grew up on Ray Harryhausen's films, and this project presented us with an opportunity to work together on something that would allow us to use a lot of the techniques we've always wanted to play around with. There was quite a bit of camaraderie, a sense of group effort. It was almost like a post-graduate school of Ray Harryhausen animation. The animators would be in my library, looking through dinosaur books, mulling things over, discussing set-ups, and saying 'Look how Ray did this or that.' It was really great, but some days it got to the point where someone would finally yell out, 'For God's sake, stop talking about Ray Harryhausen!'"

Since Tippett had his work cut out for him in supervising



“We all grew up on the films of Ray Harryhausen. There was a lot of camaraderie, a sense of group effort, almost like a post-graduate Ray Harryhausen school for stop-motion animation. It was great!”

eight different crews, he did only a small amount of the initial animation himself. “Every puppet has its own set of limitations,” said Tippett. “The design for the ‘Cain monster’ was so outlandish and difficult, we couldn’t possibly foresee all the complications that would come up in animation. So it was important that I could communicate with the animators in a way we would all understand. I animated some of the first scenes we shot, which enabled me to figure out some practical problems. I was able to look over the armatures, and see if there was anything that might need to be fixed or replaced. From there, I could develop a nomenclature on how the puppet should work. What its stride and gait should be. However, the bulk of the animation was done by Tom St. Amand, Peter Kleinow, Eric Layton, Randy Dutra, and Justin Kohn, as



The model armature crew of *ROBOCOP 2* poses with the stop motion miniatures they crafted for the film: (l to r), Blair Clark, Marc Ribaud, armature maker,

well as a few others [Mark Sullivan, Don Waller, Harry Walton, and Eric Leighton].”

The “Cain monster’s” first appearance at Hob’s warehouse hideout is intentionally kept in the mist and darkness to allow for the robot’s dramatic unveiling as the new “RoboCop 2” at the Civic Centrum. Tippett staged the shot in a manner similar to the startling entrance of Harryhausen’s and Willis O’Brien’s *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG* from beneath a nightclub stage, more than forty years ago. Tippett explained that director Irvin Kershner wanted the “Cain monster’s” appearance to be a dramatic revelation. By having the robot monster rise miraculously from beneath

the architectural model of New Detroit, Kershner sought to evoke the feeling that some sort of futuristic technology was at work. “That entrance is the first time you should see RoboCop 2 clearly and distinctly,” added Tippett.

As good as the animation and effects are in the final battle sequence of *ROBOCOP 2*, Tippett admitted that in many ways the sequence was a strange sort of letdown for him. “Basically the characters were very small,” he said. “RoboCop in his suit isn’t much taller than six feet, two inches. The ‘Cain monster’ wasn’t much taller than nine feet. That made it very difficult to project the idea that something big was happening. The minute you cut to a

THE RAY HARRYHAUSEN SCHOOL OF ANIMATION: Effects cinematographer Jim Auopperle takes a light meter reading on the stop-motion set-up of RoboCop’s climactic battle with the rampaging RoboCop 2. The lighting is a key element in matching the effects footage to the live-action shot with actor Peter Weller and the full-scale mechanical prop of RoboCop 2 (shown top). Effects master Harryhausen, now retired, perfected the art of such stop-motion substitutions in films ranging from *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG* (1949) to *CLASH OF THE TITANS* (1981).

Left: Animator Harry Walton manipulates the RoboCop 2 model for a single frame exposure, as it ascends from a hole in the street, a table-top set positioned in front of the rear screen live-action plate. Right: In this flawless stop-motion composite that continues the scene’s action, RoboCop 2 advances down the street in pursuit of RoboCop.





Tom St. Amand, Chris Rand, Paula Lucchesi, RoboCop 2 designer Craig Davies, Adam Valdez, Merrick Cheney and John Reed. Shown center is a RoboCop 2 model rigged with an LCD television face. On each side are models of ED-209 used in the first film. Above: Duplicates for multiple set-ups needed to meet the film's rushed schedule.

long shot, the characters are like little ants moving around in a vast landscape. In that regard, it wasn't even as compelling as the '50s giant monster movies, where you at least get to see the monster tear down the rollercoaster, or fall into a building."

Another problem was posed by the production's lack of time, time that was needed to work out the best dramatic possibilities for the battle. "It was all really broad stuff," said Tippett. "All that anyone knew at the start, was that it would be a big battle, with a lot of climaxes. You'd think the monster died a couple of times, but then he'd come back. There wasn't time for a weighing of the best dramatic possibilities.

It was really sort of ridiculous, because the material was more suited for a Warner Bros cartoon. It was just one big, broad stroke, with no contextual foundation. It had a real hysteria to it. Toward the end we literally ran out of things for them to do. All we could do was have them shoot their guns, and have cars blow up. It just ended up being these two metal things, bashing each other's brains out. There wasn't a whole lot of motivational material to deal with.

"The whole art of the stop-motion animator is to try and create a performance, but the performance can only be as good as the material that's available. Now on the first ROBOPOL, with considerably

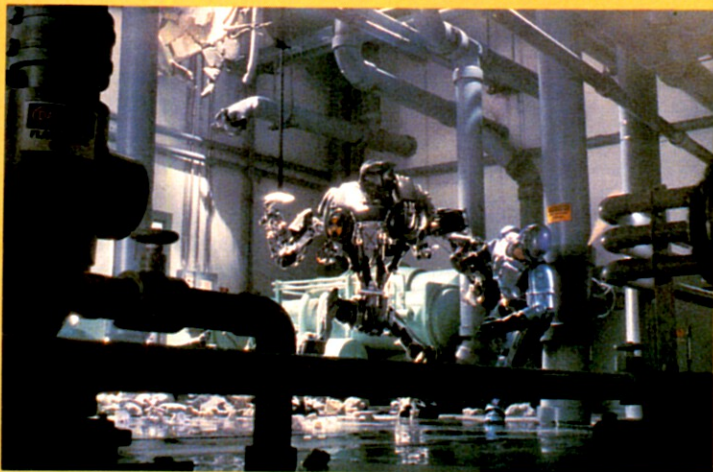
less, we went a lot further with the ED-209 character. There was humor to it, and he meant something to RoboCop's being. The 'Cain monster,' on the other hand, simply developed because everyone knew we had to have a bad guy. So he had to be bigger and meaner than ED-209. It was very clear that the story wasn't going to get figured out. It progressed to a certain point, and that was it. We were stuck with it. It was really a very difficult position for [screenwriter] Frank Miller to be in."

It was also a somewhat difficult position for Tippett, in that using the rear-screen stop-motion techniques pioneered by Harryhausen, everything has to be very specifically

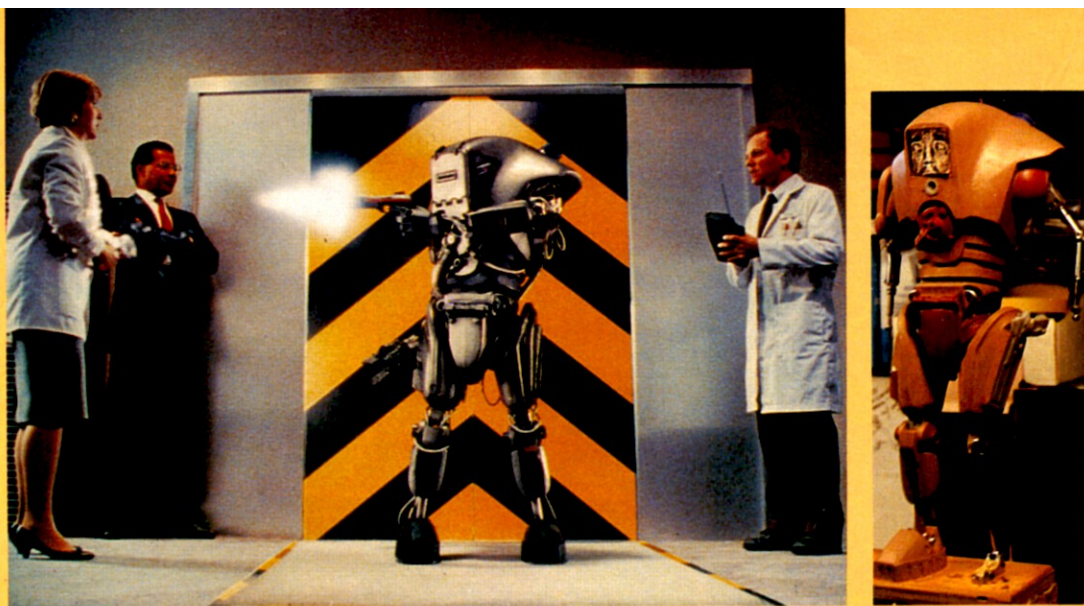
planned and staged, so the live-action footage will match the effects work. "Planning," noted Tippett, "is what we really didn't have. As a consequence of that, we never really had the capability to do exactly what we wanted. If you're working at ILM, there's a certain fudge factor. You can allow the director a great deal more freedom, because of this tremendous technology at your disposal. It can accommodate last minute decisions. So it was very frustrating for Kersh, and myself as well."

Although traditional stop-motion was used for the majority of ROBOPOL 2, the go-motion techniques devised by Tippett and Dennis Muren at ILM for DRAGONSLAYER,

Left: The cyborgs slug it out on a miniature set of Hob's hideout. Despite the film's effects artistry, its climactic showdown is largely unmotivated and shorn of thematic context, a common flaw that also often detracted from the impact of Harryhausen's work. Right: A masked Justin Kohn animates in the smoke room set-up for the sequence.



“It just ended up being two metal things bashing each other’s brains out. We literally ran out of things for them to do. It was just one big, broad cartoon stroke, with no context.”



Back to the drawing board: a prototype of RoboCop 2 blasts a scientist on its first field test. Right: the Stop-motion puppet design being sculpted over its ball-and-socket armature in clay. Below: Don Waller animating the front projection set-up.

were employed on about 35% of the shots. “We used go-motion,” said Tippett, “particularly on the shots in the smoke, at Hob’s hideout. Those shots were a real pain. We wanted the ‘Cain monster’ to exist in a real atmosphere, so we built smoke chambers, and Craig Davies designed these little quartz-halogen lamps, as well as miniature lenses that would project out this atmosphere. The practical problems in animating anything are difficult, even in the best of situations. If you make a little hot box, fill it up with smoke, have miniature lights and then work in conjunction with a blue screen or rear screen process, the problems really compound. So, whenever we can computerize the moves, so that the models will walk for us, we’ll do that. We start with the major axis, and get the puppet to walk five or six steps. Then the forward momentum, side to side, and up and down would be compu-

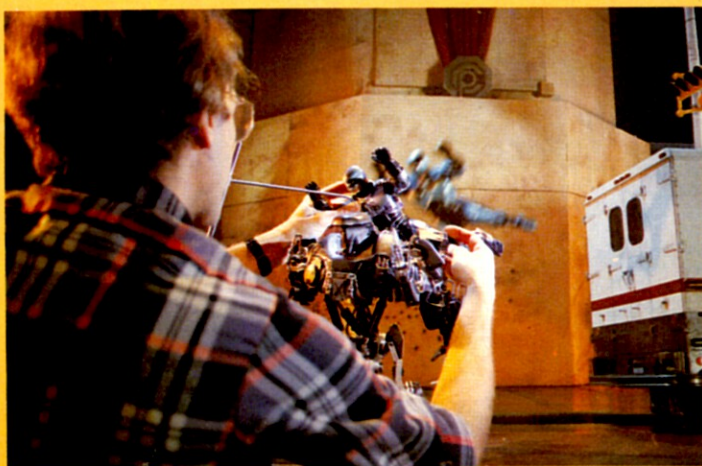
terized, and the rest of the movement would be hand-animated.”

In an early version of the script, it was intended to have both the drug lord Cain, and the unscrupulous Dr. Faxx downloaded into the metal carapace of ‘RoboCop 2.’ It would have been a dual personality, with both of them fighting for control. “To express this idea of schizophrenia,” said Tippett, “Craig [Davies] had come up with the idea of these multiple TV screens, which could also be used as diagnostic tools. They’d show the different manifestations of the two characters’ faces. But that was thrown out, as was [Frank Miller’s] idea of having the final battle take place on the scaffolding of the OCP building that was under construction. Then Kershner still wanted to keep the face of the Cain character related to the metal robot.

“In the meantime, [pro-



Animator Harry Walton replaces the real RoboCop (blurred rear screen image) with his stop-motion counterpart, to animate him getting the jump on RoboCop 2.



ducer] Jon Davison had seen some digital sample reels, prepared by deGraf/Wharman in Los Angeles, which featured these interactive computer graphic faces. They had a system which could generate a digitized face on a TV screen, which is how the Cain face was created. They scanned Tom Noonan’s face, and then recreated it as a three-dimensional computer image. Then Craig Davies designed these LCD TV monitors which were amazingly small and collapsible, so we could build the models around these TV screens. The computer-generated film was then transferred to laser disc, and that was advanced one frame at a time on the monitors, that were in the stop-motion puppet.”

When Tippett had completed work on ROBOCOP 2, he held a cast and crew screening of the well-worn workprint at his Berkeley, California studio. At that point, the score

had not been recorded, so Tippett made a tape of Bernard Herrmann’s music, taken from Ray Harryhausen’s early pictures, and showed that with the film. “It was great,” exclaimed Tippett. “I’d never seen the material look better. Those Bernard Herrmann scores were just perfect for these stop-motion action sequences. It was a little less than inspiring to hear what we finally ended up with.”

Indeed, Basil Poledouris provided such an exemplary score on the first ROBOCOP, his talents would be sadly missed the second time around. Still, Tippett remained philosophical, admitting, “You learn not to expect too much after a while. There are so many phases in getting the final film to the screen, it’s really the people in post-production who have the most difficult time, because that’s usually when everything’s so frantically rushed.” □

ROBOCOP II

Designing Robo's cyborg monster sparring partner

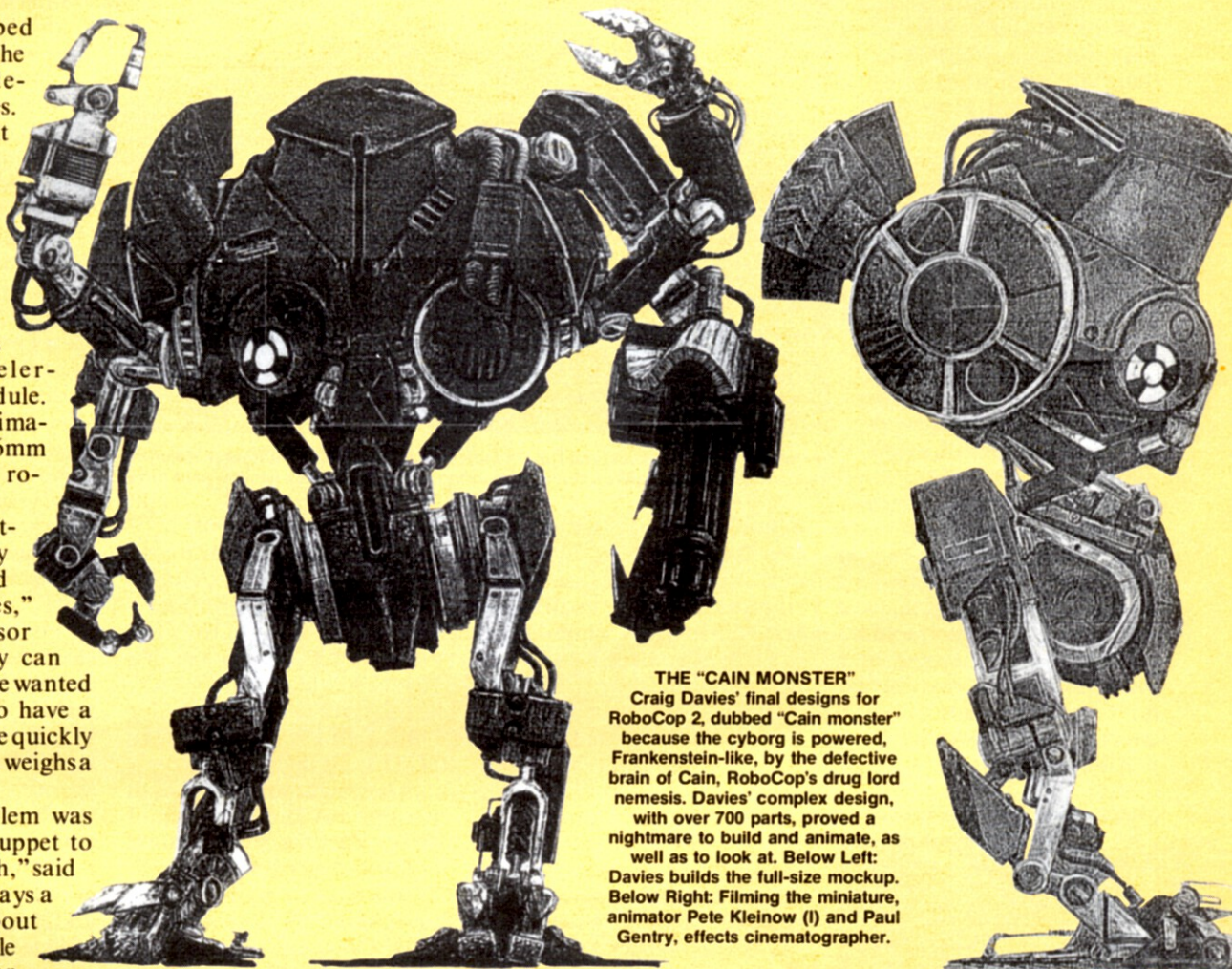
RoboCop 2, dubbed "Cain monster" by the filmmakers, was designed by Craig Davies. Tom St. Amand built the intricate armatures consisting of over 700 parts before the plastic skin was applied. St. Amand made eight of the armatures to meet the rigorous demands of the film's accelerated animation schedule. As a guide to the animators, Davies shot 16mm footage of industrial robots.

"We looked at footage of contemporary robots like those used on auto assembly lines," said effects supervisor Phil Tippett. "They can move very quickly. We wanted the 'Cain monster' to have a lethal quality, to move quickly but also appear as if it weighs a ton and a half.

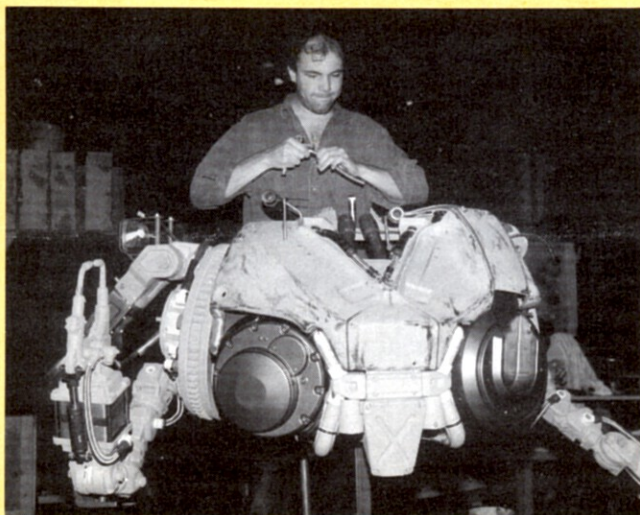
"Part of the problem was simply getting the puppet to respond to your touch," said Tippett. "There's always a break-in period of about two or three weeks while you become familiar with the model, and learn what it can give you. In this case it was very difficult just to grab hold of the puppet and make it move. The models were so big and unwieldy, with so many joints, that just balancing it and making it move was very difficult.

"After you're familiar with the physical problems, you're free to try and work out some sort of reasonable action for it. It had a gunfighter stance to it, recognizable as an anthropomorphic machine. But a lot of the moves were just phoney monster schtick."

Lawrence French



THE "CAIN MONSTER"
Craig Davies' final designs for RoboCop 2, dubbed "Cain monster" because the cyborg is powered, Frankenstein-like, by the defective brain of Cain, RoboCop's drug lord nemesis. Davies' complex design, with over 700 parts, proved a nightmare to build and animate, as well as to look at. Below Left: Davies builds the full-size mockup. Below Right: Filming the miniature, animator Pete Kleinow (l) and Paul Gentry, effects cinematographer.



It's A Mad, Mad,

Winnipeg cult director Guy Maddin continues

By Alan Jones

With *TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL* (20:4:44) still playing to open-mouthed midnight movie audiences all over America, Canadian director Guy Maddin's dazzling follow-up is currently blazing a critically-acclaimed trail throughout the world's film festivals. From Montreal to Holland, Toronto to Colorado, Munich to Birmingham, England, *ARCHANGEL* has been hailed as another mind-boggling work of outlandish art from the most willfully nonconformist director to make weird and wonderful waves in years. *ARCHANGEL* offers further proof that Maddin is carving himself a totally unique niche in the genre. His is unquestionably a name to watch out for in the future, and those who are far from the Maddin crowd won't be for very much longer.

Along with his far more fa-

Maddin Canada's fantasy cult auteur.



Veronkha (Kathy Marykuca) and Col. Philbin (Ari Cohen) fly to the Murmansk Honeymoon Hotel in *ARCHANGEL*, like a Goya war painting etched on a child's window pane in frost.

mous Canadian contemporary, David Cronenberg, Maddin determinedly breaks genre barriers, eschewing traditional fantastic imagery while daring to fashion new forms of eeriness. In her *Variety* review of *ARCHANGEL*, an open fan letter that sent Maddin into embarrassed and bemused shock, Suze waxed lyrical, commenting, "Maddin's wickedly perverted love story delves into previously uncharted realms of the macabre." With rabbits standing in as metaphors for Bolsheviks who are "half man, half beast with great big eyes and great big claws," discreet cannibalism, enforced war medal eating and strangulation by spilled intestine, the eccentric levels on which Maddin's startling *ARCHANGEL* exists becomes apparent.

However, it must be said Maddin's mad, mad, mad movies are presently very much of a limited—and acquired—taste. With a motto that could read "Silence is golden," Maddin weaves surreal tapestries that have been condemned as offensively naive and lauded as a brave attempt to shake up preconceived notions of what underground

filmmaking is all about. It's a tradition Maddin continues with a vengeance in *ARCHANGEL*, his self-confessed wayward flipside of *DR. ZHIVAGO* by way of image lifts from Sergei Eisenstein's *BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN*.

As *TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL* slowly built late night word-of-mouth throughout the summer of 1989, Maddin was hard at work shooting *ARCHANGEL*. "It was easy to get the money for *ARCHANGEL* based on *GIMLI*'s reception," said the introspective 31-year-old director. "But whereas that cost \$22,000—and making a profit on such a sum obviously isn't hard—*ARCHANGEL* cost Canadian taxpayers \$350,000. I suspect it won't make too much of its budget back."

Because *TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL* garnered Maddin an instant cult reputation, he received a number of offers to go off-off-Hollywood. "I turned them all down," he said. "I had no intention of nipping my career in the bud with such appalling lapses in taste. They were all along the lines of 'Beverly Hillbillies from Outer Space' type movies.

'Here's a script just for you,' they'd say. 'You're weird and zany.' Except they'd have discovered I was an imposter on the first day when I didn't know what end of the megaphone to yell into! Friends told me I should have directed under a pseudonym. But what's the point?" Summed up Maddin about the scripts he was offered, "They were diseased from the word go."

Enviably personal integrity is the reason why Maddin threw himself, heart and soul, into directing *ARCHANGEL*, trumpeted in its publicity manual as 'A tragedy of the Great War. A melancholy dreamlike world of long-ago lost love. A Goya war painting etched upon a child's window pane in frost,' an eloquent and accurate description. Written by Maddin and his *TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL* co-scripter, George Toles, *ARCHANGEL* is the name of a Russian city caught in the grip of the Bolshevik revolution, the backdrop for a bizarre love triangle involving Canadian Lt. Boles, Soviet nurse Veronkha and Belgian aviator Philbin, all afflicted by severe memory disorders due to mustard gas apoplexia.

"As a kid I loved the uniforms of World War I with their toy soldier quality," said Maddin of the film's inspiration. "I still find it hard to believe anyone got killed in that war because they all look so toy-like. I would always imagine them curled up in the trenches getting ready for bed more than battle."

ARCHANGEL hypnotically blends absurdist satire, horror and gore, with wrenching melodrama as Maddin's peculiar brand of twisted logic motors the nightmarish *LA RONDE* dynamic. Featuring



Maddin World!

his brand of weird and wonderful surrealism.

TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL stars Michael Gottli and Kyle McCulloch, together with Kathy Marykuc, Ari Cohen, Sarah Neville and David Falkenberg. Maddin shot ARCHANGEL in 29 leisurely days, edited it during the fall of 1989, and was set to open the movie in Canada, his home territory, last February. "ARCHANGEL was the first time I'd made a movie on an actual shooting schedule," said Maddin. "GIMLI was shot over a few months on weekends, or on Wednesday nights after the hockey game, at my mother's beauty salon where the interiors were hastily built. ARCHANGEL was all studio-based in a huge disused warehouse. We drew out a floor plan arranging each set like a jigsaw puzzle so they'd all fit in. Very cozy. I closed in the frame to make each set look cramped with stylized shadows curving in on top. Like GIMLI, I had to rely solely on cleverness, rather than budget."

ARCHANGEL is far more tongue-in-cheek than TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL, yet Maddin admitted to not knowing what he really wanted half the time. "The whole shoot was a blobby mass in truth," he laughed. "My directing style was a bit laid back, yet I'm pleased with the tone and feel I accidentally achieved. Because I was worried the actors' styles would be all over the place I decided to shoot the movie in sequence. Then if any feeling changed it would represent an on-screen evolution. I never really felt the performances were unified until we came to dub the picture. Because the studio sound was so crystal clear, the actors ended up whispering their lines in a relaxed Barry White way. [Maddin refers to the '70s soul singer who had numerous hits with the Love Unlimited Or-

"As a kid I loved the toy soldier quality of the uniforms from World War I. I always imagined them curled up in their trenches getting ready for bed more than battle."



Kyle McCulloch as Canadian Lt. Boles, Maddin's tale of the Great War and bizarre love triangle amnesia.

chestra.] That's what brought the movie together. I didn't make the voices old, scratchy, or disembodied. I made them clean and upfront because I'm tired of being accused of simply imitating silent movie strategies."

About filming ARCHANGEL's bizarre sequence involving spilled guts, Maddin had this to say. "I strove for the artificiality of violence. I needed a savage punctuation mark and I wanted Michael Gottli to cram his guts back into his stomach to conquer his cowardice and shine better than the rest of the characters. I always welcome laughter in my entertainments. Does it look convincing or fake? My rule of thumb is try your hardest and you'll still end up with something that falls short. I

had hired a makeupeffects guy to sculpt an intestinal panel. He wanted to charge \$1,500 and I could tell he'd be a problem. 'Shit,' I said, 'Let's get a pack of sausages and do it ourselves.' We untied the links, smoothed them out, and it cost \$30."

Maddin's favorite review of TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL was the one that said his labor of love looked like "rotting images of past cinema." It was a look he didn't actively pursue in ARCHANGEL despite some Cecil B. DeMille allusions and the use of deliberately wacko title cards. But accidents do happen, including blotching that makes the print look aged. "That happened because the print laboratory accidentally water-spotted the negative," explained

Maddin. "They were apologetic and didn't want to bill me but I told them to print it anyway. It suited me fine. Anytime people tell me they've ruined something, I get excited. It's almost always the best stuff!"

Maddin shot ARCHANGEL on Kodak Plus X black and white negative because he said, "That gives a harsh, high-key lighting effect. Some of the movie is speeded up too. That's another happy accident. I used my 16mm Bolex and because the spring is shot it kept adjusting to slow motion."

Maddin admitted to being "a D-grade celebrity" back in his hometown of Winnipeg. "I'm getting mentioned in the local press enough to be re-sentenced now," he said. Most of the publicity is centered on Maddin's growing international reputation and plans for a new movie, which was scheduled to begin shooting earlier this year. "It's wholly studio-based, titled CAREFUL, and is set in the Swiss Alps which we are currently building in papier-mache," said Maddin of his next project. "I'm aiming for a Michael Powell/BLACK NARCISSUS look. I'm filming in black and white again with the intention of computer coloring it for television and video release because I'm tired of distributors whining about the non-commerciality of monochrome. If I'm in full control of the operation from the beginning it will look like a hand-tinted picture."

Maddin outlined the CAREFUL story: "It's about this anxious Swiss community in a timeless '30s period who are far too careful for their own good. They live in constant fear of avalanches and this over-caution insidiously infects every part of their lives. It's partly autobiographical as my family is infuriatingly cautious—as is

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THE WANDERING KID

This animation masterpiece from Japan blends Lovecraftian horror with raw X sex.

By Todd French

More than any other country today, Japan has vigorously pushed the boundaries of the art of animation into areas—dark fantasy, erotica, horror—where Disney angels would fear to tread. From Go Nagai's DEVILMAN series of the early '70s, to Hideki Takayama's deceptively titled WANDERING KID direct-to-video shorts, with four of seven half-hour installments of the projected video series complete, Japanese animators have aggressively pioneered an anti-Disney adult fear factory.

Takayama has edited the first three episodes of his WANDERING KID series into a feature, LEGEND OF THE OVER-FIEND, circulating among fans of Japanese animation via mail order. The saga, the directorial debut of Takayama, a 36 year-old disciple of Tokyo animation designer Gakuin, is an animation masterpiece with jaw-dropping X-rated sequences of raw sex merged with supernatural violence that is

Amanojaku, the Wandering Kid, sister Megumi, and flying sprite Kuroko, battling encroaching chaos and horror.



Pornographic horror: Chojin, the demon god of director Hideki Takayama's vision of worlds on the brink of sexual appetite and apocalypse, the flip-side of our own sunny Occidental cel.

sure to stir controversy if it ever surfaces above ground to be viewed by mainstream audiences. Suffice it to say that Takayama's THE WANDERING KID should not be seen by children of any age. His feature compilation is a breathtakingly horrific flip-side of our sunny Occidental cel, an all-systems-go, gleefully uninhibited and ambivalently Asian view of Lovecraftian Cthullu melees. The film is Takayama's unadulterated vision of a world eternally on the brink of sexual appetite and apocalypse, like nothing fans of *Cinefantastique* have seen on this shore. No mincing words, THE WANDERING KID is Touchstone-colored Everclear: an audacious slash-and-burn nightmare for a new decade.

The plot: Earth is divided up into the uneasy, interlocking (but separate) tripartite realms of humans, demons, and ambiguously defined Wanderers, deucedly grey supernatural free-agents exercising a capricious guardianship over the planet. The precarious balance is upset after three thousand years by the dormant power of Chojin (the "over-fiend" of the title), a malefic being prophesied to once again unite the three worlds after a reemergence in contemporary Yokohama. In between skirmishes with one another, both demons and Wan-

derers play TERMINATOR, seeking to eradicate Chojin's human alter-ego before he attains his full powers.

Typifying the film's combination of amoral insouciance and staggering firepower is the titular character and chief Chojin-hunter, Amanojaku, the Wandering Kid. A blue-haired, widow-peaked punk teen with disturbingly feline features, he and his sister Megumi spend the film's duration engaging the other factions in a series of high-voltage, mach-5 battles. The stakes are raised radically when they get involved with a pair of likeable and glandular-driven teen lovers, Nagumo and Akemi, the former actually the earthly incarnation of the reborn over-fiend. The feature's final third has each side making its respective power play with almost everyone coming out the loser.

The idea of "randy things on the rim of our planet repossessing our turf" is a fairly standard staple of Nippon animation, but Takayama manages to give his hopped-up pulp story a truly potent bite, thanks to a compelling script written by Goro Sanyo, based on the comic written by Toshio Maeda for *Wani-Magazine*. Takayama's film offers a mesmerizing glimpse of a world rift by chaotic hunger and rioting libido, which Takayama infers not only invites but

exacerbates, and might be a mere extension of, the warp-factor phallogocentric bolt-slinging of demons and Wanderers. For Takayama, and the viewer, the film's juxtaposition of extreme sexuality and demon-eats-demon pecking order is an irresistibly powerful, surreal, vividly shocking—and oddly logical—combo that the vast majority of western cinephiles may not be ready for. ROBO-TECH, it ain't.

Throughout THE WANDERING KID, Takayama assaults the audience with unrivalled images of indelibly startling repulsion and beauty. Among them: Amanojaku being pinioned *inside* Chojin by the monster's spirithive/vic-

tim-colony; a "can you top this" aerial battle between the Wandering Kid and a demon arch-nemesis with the two turning into towering elemental hybrids as they crash through buildings, water towers, etc.; Chojin's destruction of the disparate realms' inter-dimensional barriers, with mammoth Hadean and Wanderer *Gotterdammerung* bric-a-brac crashing down on downtown Yokohama. When Nagumo transforms into his final Chojin form, he's like a crazed variation of the Devil from FANTASIA's "Night on Bald Mountain" segment as designed by H.R. Giger.

There's also an opening demon rape and a Chojin post-climax meltdown that must qualify as among the most astonishingly revolting filmic moments since the eyeball slicing of Bunuel's UN CHIEN ANDALOU. From start to finish, Takayama presents a mind-blowingly Freudian amalgam in which we, like the protagonists, are voluntary and avid voyeurs of the unspeakable—a chthonic visual consumerism that doesn't set us as horror fans too far apart from the film's monsters.

Besides the boundless imagination of Takayama's run-and-gun Lovecraftian splatterfest, what is absolutely amazing about THE WANDERING KID, and sure to

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REVIEWS

Tim Burton, reigning freak-poet of mainstream America

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS

A 20th Century Fox release, 11/90, 98 mins. In Dolby and color. Director, Tim Burton. Executive producer, Richard Hashimoto. Producer, Denise De Novi. Director of photography, Stefan Czapsky. Editor, Richard Halsey. Production designer, Bo Welch. Art director, Tom Duffield. Set designers, Rick Heinrichs, Paul Sonkski, Ann Harris. Special makeup effects, Stan Winston. Costume designer, Colleen Atwood. Music, Danny Elfman. Sound, Peter Hliddal. Screenplay by Caroline Thompson from a story by Tim Burton and Caroline Thompson.

Edward Scissorhands	Johnny Depp
Kim	Winona Ryder
Peg	Dianne Wiest
Jim	Anthony Michael Hall
Bill	Alan Arkin
Joyce	Kathy Baker
Kevin	Robert Oliver
Helen	Conchata Ferrell
The Inventor	Vincent Price

by Charles Leayman

Like some glittering hybrid born in shopping malls, Shock Theatre, and Saturday morning TV, Tim Burton is mainstream American cinema's reigning freak-poet. Ever since VINCENT and FRANKENWEENIE, the lovingly imaginative shorts Burton made for Disney (for whom he also worked as an animator), Burton has explored the mingled pleasure and pain that makes this country's pop culture so wildly disconcerting (especially for children). PEE WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE, BEETLEJUICE, BATMAN and EDWARD SCISSORHANDS all betray Burton's crazy passion for the comic book tex-

Dinosaur buff Burton puts Edward's scissorhands to good use: the director's heartfelt paean to the artist as naif.

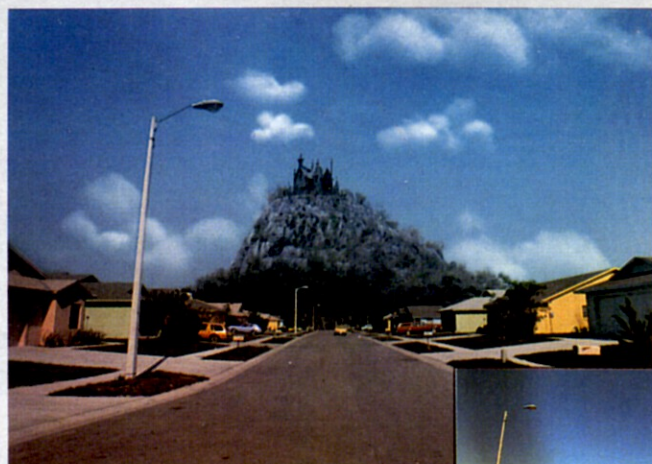


tures of America's consumer life. But it's his sense of unease lying beneath these textures, his more than mere nod to the pervasive melancholy lurking behind consumer culture's gaudy mask, that stamps Burton's films with their oddly spellbound character.

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS was touted as a "feel good" movie for family audiences during the 1990 Christmas season, but it is one of the *weirdest* fantasies ever unleashed on an unsuspecting public, a high-cal goulash of L. Frank Baum, MTV, Clive Barker, and post-mod kitch. Looking like some latter-day punk version of THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI's Cesare, the somnambulist, Edward's scissorhands provide a beautifully physicalized metaphor for love's emotional lethality, and gives Burton's film a gravity both at odds with and strangely attuned to its confectionary surface. For in Burton's world, charged emotion—be it the loss of a treasured bicycle, or a superhero's gnawing memories—is potentially world-shaking, however "artificial" that world might seem. Here the grotesquerie of Edward's predicament lends this supposedly "carefree" film a dangerous edge of Bunuelian (not to say Sadean) irony.

Under Burton's inspiration, 21 JUMP STREET's Johnny Depp plays Edward with an admirable passivity that belies the actor's hiply aggressive TV image. Clad in buckled leather like some downtown variation on HELLRAISER's Cenobites, Depp selflessly makes himself a walking signifier of eccentric artistry, a fascinating neo-Warholian "perversion" whose instincts are those of an unblinkered child (much like Burton himself). Edward's scissors become weapons only in defense; otherwise they're content to fashion impromptu works of antic art. Assuming a close identification between director and hero, EDWARD SCISSORHANDS irresistibly becomes Tim Burton's pop (but exceedingly heartfelt paean to the artist as naif, onto whom people project their best

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Edward's castle, perched atop suburbia, an effect by Peter Kuran's Visual Concepts Engineering, worthy of Magritte. Inset: The Florida location, vividly colored production design by Bo Welch.



Filming Edward's Fantasy Castle

Peter Kuran of L.A.-based Visual Concepts Engineering supervised the creation of Edward's castle, seen in one brief shot in EDWARD SCISSORHANDS, the spectre of European Romanticism perched surreally above pragmatic, well-manicured Middle America. Burton selected Kuran for this key shot, having been delighted with the optical effects Kuran supervised for BEETLEJUICE. Kuran used footage of the film's actual Florida location, turned into a multi-colored,

Toys-R-Us playland by production designer Bo Welch. Mark Stetson provided a finely detailed castle miniature which Kuran shot separately in the hills of California to get a blue sky backdrop. When California skies ultimately proved insufficiently blue, a matte painting was used to provide the sought-after hue plus a few strategically placed clouds. As for working with so strongly visual an artist as Burton, Kuran said simply, "He's great!"

Charles Leayman

Assembling Mark Stetson's huge, finely detailed castle miniature for shooting in the hills of California. Inset: The castle element of the final composite, minus an added matte of fluffy clouds.



A better man-trap, but audiences didn't beat a path to its door

PREDATOR 2

A 20th Century Fox release of a Gordon/Silver/Davis production. 11/90, 108 mins. In Dolby & color. Director, Stephen Hopkins. Producers, Lawrence Gordon, Joel Silver & John Davis. Director of photography, Peter Levy. Editor, Mark Goldblatt. Production designer, Lawrence G. Paull. Art director, Geoff Hubbard. Visual effects coordinator, J.W. Kompare. Visual effects supervisor, Joel Hynek. Creature designer, Stan Winston. Set designer, Rick Simpson. Costume designer, Marilyn Vance-Straker. Makeup designer, Scott H. Eddo. Music, Alan Silvestri. Sound, Richard Raguse. Screenplay by Jim Thomas & John Thomas, based on characters they created.

Harrigan	Danny Glover
Keys	Gary Busey
Danny	Ruben Blades
Leona	Maria Conchita Alonso
Jerry	Bill Paxton
The Predator	Kevin Peter Hall

by Brooks Landon

One of the firmly established micro-formulas of current adventure films is the scene in which the tough-guy protagonist must practice do-it-yourself first aid on some serious looking wound. For instance, we've seen Rambo variously stitch himself up with fishing line and cauterize a hole in his side with gunpowder. Recent science fiction films have put an interesting spin on the formula by having the antagonist demonstrate damage control. We've seen Schwarzenegger's Terminator work on a mangled cyborg eye, and in PREDATOR we got a glimpse of alien first aid as its extraterrestrial big game hunter had to staunch the flow of its chem-lite green blood. Now, PREDATOR 2 ups the ante on the paradigm by having the extraterrestrial strut his medical technology to patch up an amputated hand and forearm. The medical stakes seem higher in this scene, but its point remains the same—that this tough-guy is a pro, who,

Cops Ruben Blades and Danny Glover, minus the self-conscious macho posturing that slowed the original.



The Predator invades downtown L.A., made by director Stephen Hopkins to seem more strange and threatening than was the exotic jungle setting of the original.

despite the pain and danger, calmly and efficiently uses available resources to make the best of a dicey situation.

Much of the same could be said of director Stephen Hopkins' achievement in making PREDATOR 2, where his efficient use of available resources identifies him—if not as a tough guy—as a pro who can indeed make the best of a dicey situation. Given the unenviable task of shooting a sequel to a Schwarzenegger film without his Arnoldness, Hopkins has managed to craft PREDATOR 2 into a movie that may not match its predecessor's boxoffice, but that in many ways surpasses its excitement, avoiding most of the pitfalls of the "terrible twos" as it surely sets the stage for PREDATOR 3.

This time the alien Predators have set up camp in the urban jungle of 1997 Los Angeles, where the greenhouse effect temperature has soared to 109 degrees and the drug gang wars have gone ballistic. Puzzled by the massacres of rival gangs, police Lieutenant Mike Harrigan, glaringly played by Danny Glover, initially feels grudging respect for whoever has

taken out so many adversaries. "Maybe we should give him a job," quips Ruben Blades, as Glover's coolly played fellow officer.

Certainly, the unidentified "new player in town" initially seems more admirable than does a mysterious and ominous team of federal agents, led by Peter Keyes (Gary Busey, who plays the role with a crazed intensity he usually reserves for protesting motorcycle helmet laws). Keyes is determined to keep Harrigan and the local police off this case because he knows the killings have been by an alien who, if captured, might provide the U.S. with "a new era of scientific technology," not to mention some nifty new weapons. Glover's pro forma resentment to federal intervention turns to an equally pro forma rage for revenge when Blades becomes a Predator victim following Glover's orders.

Not much effort is wasted on this scenario in providing adequate motivation for Glover's characterization. The fact that Glover's Harrigan is given so little to say and so much to just look mad about makes it clear that the

script was tailored for Schwarzenegger, who turned thumbs down on returning in the series. Nevertheless, Hopkins keeps the action strobing by at a pace and intensity that keep us from missing credible, much less original, motivation. In his hands, the city of L.A. is made to seem much more strange and threatening than was the jungle in the first PREDATOR, in great part because we see the city through a steady stream of in-your-face videos from sensation-mongering TV news crews. After a while, shows such as "Hard Core with Tony Pope" (with Pope infuriatingly played by Morton Downey Jr.—who essentially plays himself) seem to view life through eyes no less alien than those of the infrared-seeing Predator. If we look like this to ourselves, what must we look like to him? A striking subway shootout lit only by muzzle flashes and a pseudo-showdown in an ultraviolet-lit slaughterhouse further reinforce this visual theme.

Gone from PREDATOR 2 is the self-conscious macho posturing that so slowed the action in PREDATOR, but screenwriters Jim and John Thomas provide a number of subtle touches of continuity with the earlier film. When Glover takes off the Predator's helmet and exclaims "You're one ugly mother..." the alien, who communicates by mockingly echoing overheard human speech, supplies the "fucker," thus repeating Schwarzenegger's aesthetic critique from the first movie. And Bill Paxton's wonderfully obnoxious performance as Jerry, the darling but terrible-joke-telling, valley-speaking cop on Glover's side, proves a more than worthy off-beat successor to Shane Black's role as Hawkins in the original. Once again, the Predator's cloaking device camouflage is an impressive effect; once again Alan Silvestri's score speeds things along; and once again the Predator characterization is just complex enough to make us recognize its brutal but principled (and even somewhat witty) code of conduct.

As a matter of fact, the conduct of the other Predators after Glover manages to kill the one he was after suggests any number of directions in which future PREDATOR scripts might turn, including the possibility of their turning toward the past. 20th Century Fox

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Camouflaging PREDATOR 2, R/Greenberg Associates

By Dan Scapperotti

For their sequel to the highly successful PREDATOR, 20th Century Fox returned to New York-based R. Greenberg Associates for visual effects, the firm that had provided the fascinating alien camouflage shots for the original film. Ten-year Greenberg veteran Joel Hynek once again supervised the work. When Paramount shuffled the release of GODFATHER III from Thanksgiving to Christmas, an anticipated spring release for PREDATOR II was quickly changed by Fox to the end of November and the almost casual pace of editing and effects work suddenly became a race against time. Hynek said director Stephen Hopkins helped make the crushing work schedule more bearable. "He has a tremendous amount of energy," said Hynek. "When we were working these long days he kept our spirits up. He has a very dramatic sense of how to stage action."

Fox wanted the Predator camouflage effects to be more polished in PREDATOR II. Double exposures in the original's camouflage scenes were hidden by its jungle setting, but would have proved glaring with the sequel's urban backdrop. Improvements on the sequel resulted from Hynek's use of Greenberg's CompuQuad computer-controlled optical printer to make the concentric clear core mattes of the figure of the Predator. Mattes are generated optically from footage of the alien filmed in a red suit against a black background.

Hynek covered camouflage action using a motion-control camera to film duplicate footage using a thirty percent wider lens to provide extra background information to put into the Predator's transparent camouflaged image, which appears to distort the background as if seen through a magnifying lens. "We'd then go to a black stage and give the Predator the red suit, set up the situation and have the Predator run through the same action," said Hynek. Blue screen techniques were used whenever the Predator had to be shown going into or out of camouflage. Silhouettes in those cases were pulled from blue screen mattes of Stan Winston's makeup.



Kevin Peter Hall in Stan Winston's Predator makeup filmed blue screen for shots showing the alien going into or out of camouflage.

One of the biggest challenges for Hynek was the film's subway sequence, in which the Predator crashes through the roof of a speeding subway car in search of a victim. The two cars were built on a stage and director of photography Peter Levy used sequential lights bounced off mirrors, with gauze material to provide the effective illusion of the train speeding through a tunnel. Since the lighting effects weren't repeatable, Hynek couldn't reshoot the action with a wider lens to make the mattes for the camouflage effect. "Eugene Mamut, who runs our Academy Award winning computerized CompuQuad optical printer, came up with a very clever solution," said Hynek. "He devised a way of rotating the normal plate with a slight difference between each size so that it gave it the same sort of effect."

Matching the motion of the Predator on the black stage was also difficult because the camera used to film the bouncing subway car hadn't been locked off. "We placed little tiny LEDs just out of frame on the footage and then plotted them on the CompuQuad to create a motion file for that particular take," explained Hynek of the solution. "When we shot the Predator with a locked-off camera on the stage we took that motion file and applied it to him and from that point on his motion matched the subway car."

Also problematic was Glover's climactic encounter with up to ten Predators, with the floor of their ship obscured by two feet of Tulee fog, requiring mattes where their legs disappeared into the fog. Since the camouflage action of each of the Predators

would affect the others, Hynek's crew had to shoot each of them separately with motion-control cameras and layer them optically later to avoid silhouette problems. "It was a nightmare," Hynek admitted. "When it came time for the blue screen takes, we shot the Predators with the same motion-control cameras as usual. We then shot the Tulee fog bubbling, creating this rippling edge. Then we put the camera through the same moves. When we were compositing these Predators—again using the CompuQuad—the rotoscoping department positioned the

rippling fog edge to the motion of the knees of each Predator."

Another interesting effects scene takes place in a dark alley covered by a forty-foot-long puddle where the alien stalks King Willie (Calvin Lockhart). The Predator jumps from the roof, lands in the puddle and pursues the fleeing drug dealer. "This is one of the best camouflage shots in the film," said Hynek, who used a special velcro-driven dolly devised by Walter Heart of Image G to run below the water and trigger the Predator's forced air footprint splashes. The motion of the red-suited Predator was carefully matched to the effects footprints on a track laid out on the black set, with footfalls synchronized via a computer-controlled beeper. □

R/Greenberg's camouflage tour-de-force, supervised by Joel Hynek, as the alien terrorizes a subway car, high power action staged by director Stephen Hopkins, evocatively lit by cinematographer Peter Levy. Below: Hall in the suit used to pull mattes.



Allen misfires with a comedy of manners a la Lewis Carroll

ALICE

An Orion Pictures release. 11/90, 106 mins. In color. Director, Woody Allen. Producer, Robert Greenhut. Executive producers, Jack Rollins, Charles H. Joffe. Director of photography, Carlo Di Palma. Editor, Susan E. Morse. Production designer, Santo Loquasto. Art director, Speed Hopkins. Set decorator, Susan Bode. Costume designer, Jeffrey Kurland. Sound, James Sabat. Written by Woody Allen.

Alice	.....	Mia Farrow
Joe	.....	Joe Mantegna
Ed	.....	Alec Baldwin
Dorothy	.....	Blythe Danner
Vicki	.....	Judy Davis
Doug	.....	William Hurt
Dr. Yang	.....	Keye Luke
Muse	.....	Bernadette Peters
Nancy Brill	.....	Cybill Shepherd
Alice's Mother	.....	Gwen Verdon

by Thomas Doherty

Known far and wide as the droll diagnostician of urban angst and the last of the high modernists, Woody Allen is also a closet aficionado of bizarre junk and a deft practitioner of the *cinéfantastique*. To take one buoyant example, the "marauding tit" sequence in *EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX* is the kind of high concept that American International Pictures might have underwritten were Allen's carefree monster-mashing not yoked to a depressing existentialism. "Sleeping with you is a Kafkaesque experience," a groupie tells Alvy Sing-

er in *ANNIE HALL*, and Allen's version of the fantastic is unnervingly Kafkaesque too—after the fashion of "The Metamorphosis" where everything is perfectly normal, except for that small detail of now being a cockroach.

As the title signals, *ALICE* is a comedy of manners with a through-the-looking-glass perspective. It tumbles head over heels from the level ground of Pinteresque drama to Lewis Carroll flights of fancy (literally so in the case of a soaring levitation over New York's skyline). Though no bummer, the trip is no first-class excursion. Against the solid nourishment of his last two entrees, *HANNA AND HER SISTERS* or *CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS*, *ALICE* is slight Allen. Rank it somewhere to the south of *RADIO DAYS* and about level with the "Oedipus Wrecks" chapter of *NEW YORK STORIES*.

No crowded ensemble effort, *ALICE* is a one-woman show. A mad-hatted Mia Farrow plays a mousy Park Avenue housewife, a socially maladroit social x-ray unfulfilled by the daily grind of manicures, massages, and shopping. WASPY husband William



Mia Farrow, advised in affairs of the heart by the ghost of boyfriend Alec Baldwin.

Hurt is insensitive and oblivious to her percolating discontent, her so-called friends are airhead gossips, her children a background buzz. Enter handsome saxophone player Joe Mantegna, who gallantly retrieves her volume of Edna St. Vincent Millay. The couple's eyeline matches. Already beset by psychosomatic back pains, Alice now has butterflyflies in her stomach.

As in *GREMLINS*, oddly enough, what lifts the dreary occidentals out of their mundane existence is the injection of some oriental mystery—and it is again the venerable Keye Luke (in his final role, sad to say) who plays the

dispenser of Chinese aphorisms and supernatural trouble. Like the "Eat Me/Drink Me" bottles imbibed by her namesake, his herbal potions transport Alice into a wonderland where relief—and invisibility, human flight, and sexual magnetism—is just a sip away.

Embarking on her first extramarital affair, Alice is herself a bottled up Victorian—frustrated desire, killer guilt, and painful self-consciousness. ("I've been meaning to go on a diet," she blurts right before the lights go down.) Her first herb-induced personality transformation is a revelation. In

The Special Effects of ALICE by Balsmeyer & Everett

The effects of *ALICE* were produced by Manhattan-based Balsmeyer and Everett, Inc., specialists in motion picture graphics and special effects. Randall Balsmeyer was hired to supervise the film's effects work on the strength of his motion-control work for *GHOST* and *DEAD RINGERS*. Director Woody Allen, however, all but ruled out the use of Balsmeyer's motion-control technology as too intrusive to his regular working methods. Allen insisted on finding ways to shoot the film's effects that would allow for the most natural interactions of his performers. And director of photography Carlo DiPalma sought to incorporate the effects within long sweeping camera movements.

Balsmeyer's solution was to suggest the use of soft-split screens to accomplish the film's "transparent" ghost effects as well as its appearance/disap-

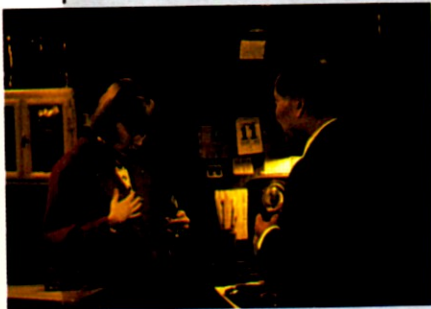
pearance invisibility shots. The use of soft-splits permitted shooting action with all the actors together at once. After each take the actors walked off-camera so that matching backgrounds of the empty set could be shot. Balsmeyer's use of a "pan and lock" technique for several shots permitted camera motion before and/or after effects were to occur. At a pre-determined point in the shot, a camera assistant locked the camera head, cuing actors to exit or enter the scene so that

the necessary background plates could be photographed as part of the original take. In post-production the live shot could be combined with the background footage using either a wipe, dissolve or percentage exposure to accomplish the desired effect.

Most of the opticals in the film were completed at the Effects House in New York. John Alagna did optical layout and Robert Rohwalt shot the critical camera work necessary.

Dan Scapperotti

Baldwin's subtle fade-out in the spotlight after his last dance with Farrow.



Farrow disappears thanks to a potion administered by Keye Luke, an effect designed by Balsmeyer and Everett.

the blink of an eye, in a close-up long take encounter with Mantegna, she blossoms into an accomplished flirt and moistly draws in her prey.

As the herbs continue to kick in and escalate in outlandish effect, the film loses its own equilibrium. The tone shifts in a *menage* of styles—marital woes and confessional self-discovery set aside whimsical bouts of invisibility and bluescreen-wrought human flight—are designed to produce a delightful magical ride not a queasy motion sickness. The film's patently off-kilter landscape doesn't smooth things out. Though nominally set in the '90s and punctuated by timely lines ("Watch Good Morning America," her inattentive husband advices), the vaguely Art Deco set design is a retro-displacement and the costuming might have been lifted whole cloth from *THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO*.

By setting *ALICE* both in and out of the real New York, Allen means to anchor the tale in a reality sturdy enough to sustain the drama but unsteady enough to support the hallucinatory. In the past, Allen's detours into the unreal have been mainly cinematic—Alvy Singer dragging Marshall McLuhan into the frame in *ANNIE HALL*, Jeff Daniels walking out of the screen in *THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO*, and the whole of *ZELIG*. Under his skeptical eye, trick photography exposes the lying image in the age of computer graphics. In *ALICE* the transparently unspecial special effects don't break down the cinematic frame; they break up the nature of the narrative and the flighty whimsy falls to earth.

The cliched plot is a disaster. *WHAT'S UP, TIGER LILY?*—before the English language dubbing—was more compelling. A bored housewife trapped in a loveless marriage and a dollhouse of her own making? What decade is this anyway? And what social stratum for that matter. The spiritual trouble of the idle rich is not exactly a natural hook for mass audience identification. Allen's earlier New York films were about folks at the lower and middle rungs of the social ladder—marginal artists, academics, and struggling whatever. From the low rent *TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN* to the luxury interiors of *CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS* is a major shift in class allegiance. *ALICE* takes the filthy rich ambiance to (apparently

straight-faced) extremes. With her limo drivers, cooks, attendants, and babysitters, Alice has more back-up assistance than MC Hammer. One reason the New York of *ALICE*, for all the "on location" shooting, seems so unreal is that Allen plainly has not taken the subway lately.

Allen enthusiasts can divert themselves by cataloging moments from his past—a funny drug sequence reminiscent of the huddle around the Orb in *SLEEPER*, Bernadette Peters as a writer's muse and Alec Baldwin as an old boyfriend doing apparitional turns that recall the Humphrey Bogart companionship of *PLAY IT AGAIN SAM*—but *ALICE* is a radical departure from traditional Allen territory in one major way: religion. The director who made neurotic New York Jewishness a culture-wide malady switches religious affiliations. Alice is a former "good Catholic" girl and would-be nun who is not as lapsed as she thinks. But as in *CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS*, the first film in which Allen took his Jewish heritage more as a lifeline than a punchline, the director treats Catholicism seriously. In the case of the film's literal patron saint, none other than Mother Theresa herself, he is downright reverent. In *BANANAS* and *HANNAH AND HER SISTERS*, Catholic ritual was a source of wild hilarity—hawking cigarettes from the communion rail, studying a catechism with mayonnaise and white bread. On the evidence of *ALICE*, Allen is a lapsed infidel. Not to step on the ending, but this is the first Allen film that will leave viewers open-mouthed and disbelieving at the finale. Can the religious skeptic be serious about the redemptive worth of a life of nun-like devotion and self-imposed vows of poverty? Go ask Allen. □

Allen, losing touch with New York.



BOXOFFICE SURVEY: 1990 RECAP

An analysis of the top grossing films, as reported in *Variety*'s "Weekend Boxoffice Report" reveals that horror, fantasy and science fiction films accounted for 42.6% of all film earnings in 1990. This is a slight increase over the genre's 1989 market share (40%), continuing an upturn from the low grosses seen since the mid-'80s.

Top-grossing genre films in the *Variety* totals are listed at right. Titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f), and science fiction (sf), followed by the number of weeks in 1990 each title made the *Variety* list. The fantasy mega-hit *GHOST* scored big, earning in excess of \$206 million, followed by *TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES*, earning over \$133 million and foreshadowing distributor New Line Cinema's hopes for its current sequel.

Of the 325 titles that comprised the weekly listings, 38 were fantasy films (38 last year), accounting for 11.7% of the total and 18.4% of receipts; 24 science fiction films (25 last year), 7.4% of the total and 16.1% of receipts; and 31 horror films (30 last year), 9.5% of the total and 7.8% of receipts.

In breakdown by distributor (below), Paramount (which distributed *GHOST* and *THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER*) grabbed the largest portion of the genre pie—more than \$360 million, followed by Buena Vista (distributor of Warren Beatty's *DICK TRACY* and Spielberg protege Frank Marshall's *ARACHNOPHOBIA*)—which grossed over \$355 million from its genre releases.

TOP TEN MONEY MAKERS

<i>GHOST</i> (Par, f, 25)	\$206,143,657
<i>TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES</i> (Ni, sf, 27)	\$133,157,830
<i>THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER</i> (Par, sf, 28)	\$120,595,872
<i>TOTAL RECALL</i> (Tri, sf, 20)	\$118,302,598
<i>DICK TRACY</i> (Bv, f, 11)	\$103,550,723
<i>BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III</i> (U, sf, 25)	\$86,535,561
<i>FLATLINERS</i> (Col, sf, 19)	\$61,351,486
<i>ARACHNOPHOBIA</i> (Bv, h, 18)	\$53,133,880
<i>PROBLEM CHILD</i> (U, f, 15)	\$50,363,925
<i>ROBOCOP 2</i> (Or, sf, 15)	\$45,404,723

OTHER TOP EARNERS

<i>THE JUNGLE BOOK</i> (Bv, f, 18)	\$44,645,619
<i>GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH</i> (Wb, f, 16)	\$41,482,207
<i>JACOB'S LADDER</i> (Tst, h, 8)	\$40,050,774
<i>JOE VS. THE VOLCANO</i> (Wb, f, 18)	\$39,381,963
<i>LITTLE MERMAID</i> (Bv, f, 19)	\$34,326,216
<i>DARKMAN</i> (U, sf, 11)	\$32,973,119
<i>LOOK WHO'S TALKING TOO</i> (Tst, f, 3)	\$27,973,686
<i>PACIFIC HEIGHTS</i> (Bv, h, 8)	\$27,892,883
<i>ALWAYS</i> (U, f, 13)	\$27,550,850
<i>EDWARD SCISSORHANDS</i> (Fox, f, 4)	\$27,253,282
<i>PREDATOR 2</i> (Fox, sf, 6)	\$26,625,619
<i>CHILD'S PLAY 2</i> (U, h, 8)	\$26,700,995
<i>THE EXORCIST III</i> (Fox, h, 8)	\$25,040,590
<i>ERNEST GOES TO JAIL</i> (Bv, f, 21)	\$24,989,698
<i>FANTASIA</i> (Bv, f, 12)	\$24,788,495
<i>GHOST DAD</i> (U, f, 19)	\$23,044,650
<i>LOOK WHO'S TALKING</i> (Tst, f, 19)	\$22,896,729
<i>THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER</i> (Bv, f, 7)	\$21,644,338
<i>THE FIRST POWER</i> (Ori, h, 9)	\$21,365,321
<i>BACK TO THE FUTURE II</i> (U, sf, 10)	\$21,190,021
<i>JETSONS: THE MOVIE</i> (U, f, 17)	\$19,589,765
<i>DUCK TALES: THE MOVIE—TREASURE OF THE LOST LAMP</i> (Bv, f, 15)	\$18,115,724
<i>TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE: THE MOVIE</i> (Par, h, 9)	\$16,305,883
<i>THE GUARDIAN</i> (U, h, 8)	\$16,140,440
<i>TREMORS</i> (U, sf, 11)	\$15,475,065
<i>SPACED INVADERS</i> (Bv, sf, 18)	\$15,361,058
<i>MR. DESTINY</i> (Bv, f, 11)	\$15,113,322
<i>WILD AT HEART</i> (Gol, f, 15)	\$14,545,943
<i>LORD OF THE FLIES</i> (Col, h, 11)	\$13,812,230
<i>MISERY</i> (Co, h, 5)	\$11,561,579
<i>THE WITCHES</i> (Wb, f, 20)	\$10,360,553
<i>GRAVEYARD SHIFT</i> (Par, h, 8)	\$ 9,108,797
<i>NIGHTBREED</i> (Fox, h, 6)	\$ 8,871,183
<i>BLUE STEEL</i> (Mgm, h, 5)	\$ 7,701,707
<i>THE COOK, THE THIEF HIS WIFE AND HER LOVER</i> (Mir, h, 22)	\$ 7,381,748
<i>LEATHERFACE</i> (Ni, h, 6)	\$ 5,758,827

GENRE FILM REVENUE BY DISTRIBUTOR

Distributor	# of Films	Earnings	% of Total
Paramount (Par)	6	\$360,200,308	19.6%
Buena Vista (Bv)	10	\$355,996,073	19.4%
Universal (U)	10	\$319,564,391	17.4%
Tri-Star (Tst)	4	\$209,223,787	11.4%
New Line Cinema (Ni)	6	\$145,358,167	7.9%
20th Century Fox (Fox)	6	\$115,937,504	6.3%
MGM (Mgm)	6	\$ 95,108,035	5.2%
Columbia (Col)	4	\$ 94,420,482	5.0%
Orion (Ori)	4	\$ 67,371,474	3.7%
Goldwyn (Gol)	1	\$ 14,545,943	0.8%
United Artists (Ua)	2	\$ 9,226,450	0.5%
MGM (Mgm)	1	\$ 7,701,707	0.4%
Miramax (Mir)	1	\$ 7,381,748	0.4%
Millimeter (Mmr)	3	\$ 6,233,070	0.3%
All Others	29	\$ 26,735,590	1.5%

• Indicates a film originally released before 1990

PSYCHO IV: THE BEGINNING

Joseph Stefano on Scripting Norman's Roots

By Steve Biodrowski

How do you revive a moribund series? That was the question facing the producers of *PSYCHO IV* after the critical and box-office disappointment of *PSYCHO III* (1986), the previous sequel to Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 masterpiece.

Their answer was to turn to Joseph Stefano, the man who had adapted Robert Bloch's novel into the screenplay for the original film.

For a year and a half, producers George Zaloom and Les Mayfield had developed several drafts of a script based on their own premise, which featured Norman Bates (in a pastiche of Hitchcock's *SPELLBOUND*) posing as a psychiatrist in a mental institution while outside a copy-cat murderer imitates his crimes. When these drafts proved unsatisfactory, Zaloom and Mayfield began to consider asking Stefano to come on board; they were initially reluctant, however, because of Stefano's pronounced disdain for the previous sequels. When finally approached, Stefano responded that he would be interested—if he could turn the project into a

Former *ET* star Thomas as young Norman, with Olivia Hussey as Norma Bates, his schizophrenic mother.



Stefano, who also wrote Hitchcock's original.

prequel exploring the origin of Norman's mental illness. The idea appealed to the producers, who had included some flashbacks to Norman's childhood in their version. But Stefano insisted these scenes would have to be expanded to fill seventy per cent of the script.

"I was not interested in occasional flashbacks—I wanted to tell the *whole* story," said Stefano. "I didn't want to pick up Norman today and send him back for more murders. I don't think that Norman Bates is a character you need to put into that position again. I thought both sequels were unfortunate, whatever their strengths, in that it's very difficult to keep from turning this character into some kind of campy figure, and Tony [Perkins] didn't help to avoid that. Their mere existence was wrong. There can be no kind of human justification for doing a sequel to the Manson murders. I felt there was nothing besides crass commercialism—no redeeming social value—in doing a sequel, unless they were going to bring him out and show what twenty years of therapy can do. But I saw that what he was like was exactly what he had been, and what they were saying, in effect, was that there is no way to renegotiate in this world with a psychological problem—that if you've got it, you've got it, and they can keep you in jail for a hundred years because when you get out you'll do it again. I just thought, 'Vile!' I don't think I need that message. I don't think it's a true message."

Turning *PSYCHO IV* into a prequel was a way to avoid these pitfalls, but it also created a pitfall of its own—predictability—since the entire story would be leading up to the events of the original *PSYCHO*. "It was a good opportunity to delve into the past, but I realized I would also need a very strong contemporary story," said Stefano. "Without the present-day Norman Bates character, the prequel would have ended probably with the shower sequence from *PSYCHO*. What other high point was there in his life? So I needed to have the [Perkins] character—which pleased the producers because they wanted Tony to reappear



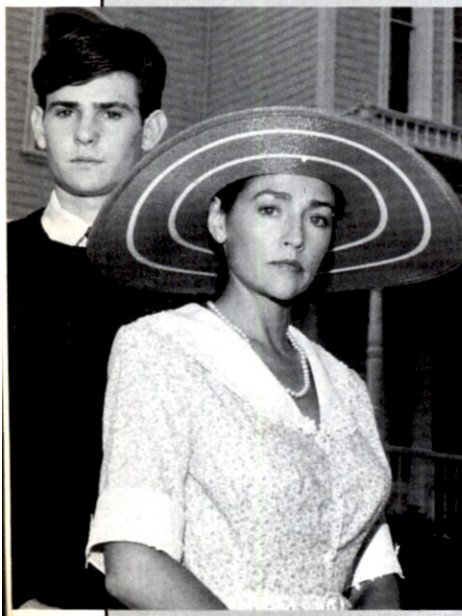
The three faces of Norman Bates: (l to r) Ryan Finnegan, Henry Thomas and Anthony Perkins on the Bates house set constructed at Universal Studios, Florida.

and he wanted to, very much. So I took Norman beyond where he might be in reality after the tragedy of *PSYCHO III*. (I mean that as a movie—they had all but buried *PSYCHO* with that dreadful piece.) I moved him further along in his life and his therapy. I made him a married man. He's finally learned how to love somebody and have natural sex without having to kill her. The Norman that I wrote is very different: stronger, more mature. I wanted him without the prissy mannerisms Tony Perkins had given to him. I wanted him played straight, as a human being with a great deal of problems. I hoped Anthony Perkins would stretch enough to play him that way. I felt that that's the way the Norman Bates I'd created was, and they'd gone way off the track in the interim.

"There are two points to the movie: one is to show what had made him the way he was in the first place; the other is to show where he had arrived in his life and to show that, like most neurotics, in a crisis situation he will resort to his old ways of dealing with things."

Abandoning Zaloom and Mayfield's *SPELLBOUND* pas-

tiche, Stefano wanted to structure his story by having Norman phone in to a television talk show and discuss his past with the Dr. Richmond character from the conclusion of *PSYCHO*, but budgetary limitations dictated that the format be changed to talk radio—a restriction which Stefano managed to weave into the fabric of the script. "I wondered if it would be effective cinematically," said Stefano. "What made it work for me was that I caught on to the fact that in a way Norman is doing what he has always done, which is to talk to someone who's not there. The art that he has developed through his neurosis is for talking to inanimate objects. I simply took that one step further by having the object talk back, rather than him supplying the voice. With that format, we were off and running. I wrote the script based on a lot of the background stuff I'd had in my mind since I'd done *PSYCHO*—the background I'd supplied for the character that wasn't anywhere in the book and couldn't be anywhere in the movie without giving the ending away. Then, once I started taking you into the past, whenever I returned to the present I indicated that there was a very severe conflict in



An authentic, uplifting successor to Hitchcock

**PSYCHO IV:
THE BEGINNING**

An MTE & Showtime TV presentation. 11/90, 96 mins. Director, Mick Garris. Executive producer, Hilton A. Green. Producers, George Zaloom & Les Mayfield. Director of photography, Rodney Charters. Editor, Charles Bornstein. Music, Graeme Revell, with original score by Bernard Herrmann. Screenplay by Joseph Stefano.

Norman Bates Anthony Perkins
Young Norman Henry Thomas
Norma Bates Olivia Hussey
Talk Show Host CCH Pounder
Radio Engineer John Landis

by Steve Biodrowski

PSYCHO IV: THE BEGINNING is what a sequel to PSYCHO should be: a film which explores the character of Norman Bates in greater detail than the original could while concealing its twist ending. Whereas PSYCHO II was straight-jacketed into an arbitrary plot structure—turning Norman back into a killer in the hope of launching a profitable series of continuing sequels—PSYCHO III so degraded the boxoffice potential that Part IV is now free to follow its dramatic progression to a logical conclusion, without undue concern for setting up a potential fifth episode. The benefits are considerable in that, for the first time, we get to see Norman, older and wiser, confront the etiology of his insanity and actually defeat a potential relapse.

When last we saw Norman at the close of PSYCHO III, he was being hauled off once again to the asylum, his mother's severed arm tucked lovingly in his, and the message was clear: mental illness dooms a person beyond any hope or redemption. Screenwriter Joseph Stefano, himself the beneficiary of time spent in psychoanalysis, takes a somewhat more optimistic view of the potential for recovery. Five years have elapsed, and Norman is now living in the comfortable suburban home of his new wife, a therapist he met in the asylum. Unfortunately, he is also calling a radio talk show and threatening to kill again. While recounting childhood incidents which drove him to kill his mother and her lover, he eventually reveals that his intended victim is his pregnant wife. Convinced that his insanity is a genetic defect, Norman wants to prevent the birth of another monster. His wife, on the other hand, refuses to believe that their baby is doomed to be a homicidal maniac.

What Stefano is playing out for



Perkins, adding a new dimension to a familiar role, as Norman overcomes his inner demons.

us, cleverly disguised as a horror movie, is a debate on the nature of evil. As Norman describes on radio what his mother did to him, he denies its effect, blaming her genes rather than her behavior. For Norman, ever the faithful son, claiming that behavior is genetically predetermined is the last way to let his mother off the hook. However, the message of the film, eloquently stated by Norman's wife, is that people can change, that even the worst psychological damage can be repaired. In the first happy ending to grace a PSYCHO film, Norman realizes that she is right, that he is no longer the person he was. For anyone who has wrestled with personal inner demons, seeing Norman triumph over his is a surprisingly uplifting experience.

Director Mick Garris makes PSYCHO IV a tremendous improvement over his directorial debut, CRITTERS II, but not surprisingly comes up short when his work is compared—as the title demands—to that of Hitchcock. Like many acolytes, Garris seems to have learned the wrong lessons from the Master—how to move the camera in interesting ways, but not how to use those techniques to interpret the story.

For instance, in the film's first flashback Garris shows young Norman stabbing a young woman to death, his first victim. The scene is utterly predictable—we know

what's going to happen—but Garris plays the action for suspense. He doesn't seem to realize that, unlike the original, Part IV is a psychodrama, not a suspense thriller. Where attention needs to be focused is on Norman, on his psychological reaction, on his transformation from Norman to Norma, from innocent to killer. Instead, we get the standard stalk-and-slash blocking, not in the least helped by an abysmally overplayed performance from the victim, which makes us all too glad to see her dispatched. Neither Garris nor the actress is able to invoke any sympathy in us for the character, perhaps forgetting that it was audience empathy, not merely fast cutting, that made the shower sequence in PSYCHO so horrifying.

Also inviting comparison to Hitchcock's original is the reuse of composer Bernard Herrmann's main title theme. Graeme Revell's score for the sequel is moody and original, and could have been quite effective on its own without such intrusive borrowing, which was probably forced upon him.

In the new sequel, Henry Thomas does a remarkable job of recreating Anthony Perkins original approach to the character. Olivia Hussey plays mother Norma Bates not as an evil hag but as a beautiful yet twisted woman who could inspire Norman's devotion, loyalty and jealousy. Perkins himself gives a completely different interpretation of his famous role. His Norman is a fully integrated personality now; no longer the complete innocent, his psychological makeup now contains those dangerous aspects which previously were relegated to the Norma half of his personality. Of course those are not aspects he or anyone else would want to have, but the fact that they are conscious means that he can now confront and defeat them in a way he could not before.

With that confrontation, the series could well end. The filmmakers cannot, unfortunately, resist hinting at the possibility of another sequel, and PSYCHO V: THE END has been mentioned as a title. We can only hope they pay heed to the words of Norman's wife: "No more blood, Norman; please, no more blood!"

his life today, which prompted him to phone in."

For the most part, Stefano avoided continuity with the previous sequels and tried to write IV as if there had been no II and III. "Ideally, this is the way it should have been done first. I ignored both sequels. The only thing I mentioned—and this was at [producer] Hilton Green's request, really—was the confusion in Part II as to who was Norman's real mother. Hilton felt the dyed-in-the-wool fans would be disturbed if I simply ignored this piece of information, so I simply said it was a lie." Stefano also had to come up with a believable explanation for how Norman could again be at liberty a mere four or five years after the murders in Part III.

"I envisioned he was in one of these controversial institutions that do very hard therapy and get people out as fast as they possibly can," said Stefano. "They call it 'Phased Re-Entry into Society,' and you have to have somebody out there who cares enough to vouch for you and look after you. So I had a controversy going that was so realistic you could come across it on a real talk show. Then to bring Norman Bates into it was to bring myth into reality."

Though pleased with the project, Stefano is unhappy that PSYCHO IV: THE BEGINNING was broadcast on Showtime, rather than released theatrically. "The two pictures in-between are what this picture had to battle, and that's why this film was made for Showtime: the top executives at Universal didn't want their studio to be associated with PSYCHO sequels. Especially because of Part III, the series had become a campy, preposterous property. It was very difficult for them to take seriously; even though they liked the script very much, they refused to release it theatrically. I feel that was mainly due to Part III and what Mr. Perkins did to Part III. Therefore, the entire characterization was really down the tubes."

The characterization Stefano said he tried to recapture in Part IV is the one he, Perkins, and Hitchcock created for the original PSYCHO, which is somewhat different from the Rod Steiger-ish momma's boy of the novel. "I think the likeableness of the Norman Bates character is inside us," noted Stefano. "We're all that bad little boy whose mommy was punishing us and seducing us at the same time and who just never came to terms with having to deal with this ambivalence." □

A ghost story that's wonderfully spine tingling

THE GIRL IN A SWING

A Nordisk Film release of a Panorama Film Intl. production. 12/88, 117 mins. In color. Director, Gordon Hessler. Producers, Just Betzer & Benni Korzen. Director of photography, Claus Loof. Editor, Robert Gordon. Production designer, Rob Shilling. Costume designer, Betina Betzer. Music, Carl Davis. Sound, Preben Mortensen. Screenplay by Hessler, based on Richard Adams novel.

Karin.....Meg Tilly
 Alan.....Rupert Frazer
 The Vicar.....Nicholas le Prevost
 Mrs. Desland.....Elspet Gray
 Flick.....Lorna Heilbron
 Angela.....Claire Shepherd

by Steve Biodrowski

Thanks to advances in prosthetic makeup effects, there has been a glut of films exploiting the simple mortal fear of pain and death, while only a very few have taken on the more subtle challenge of portraying the almost irrational dread one feels when confronted with the supernatural. With little in the way of action, violence, or special effects, director Gordon Hessler's work in *THE GIRL IN A SWING* proves that it is still possible to raise a chill or two merely by suggestion and understated artistry.

There are a couple of gambits which must be played for this approach to prove successful: a slow, careful build-up is one necessity, and a certain degree of mystery is required, allowing the audience's imagination to suggest terrors of its own. Hessler's wonderfully suggestive original director's cut, released in Europe, proved to be a superlative translation of the haunting Richard Adams book on which it is based. Less satisfying is the truncated version, designed to speed up the pace, released theatrically here by Miramax. And then there's the version now available on videocassette and cable, which consists of the truncated American version with additional voice-over narration to explain away the mystery.

In his script, Hessler changed the name of Adams' mysterious, haunted girl of the title (Meg Tilly) from Kathie to the more pronounceable Karin and grappled with properly setting up Adams' supernatural climax. Adams' book is the first person story of Alan (Rupert Frazer), the caricature of a conservative and repressed Englishman, beginning with his earliest memory. Adams uses the recollection of an experiment in school to demonstrate Alan's la-



Rupert Frazer and Meg Tilly as the ill-fated lovers of director Gordon Hessler's superbly eerie adaptation of the Richard Adams novel.

tent talent for extra-sensory perception. Through an effective use of language and literary technique in his book, Adams is able to link the disparate episodes of Alan's life to his tragic love for the mysterious girl he meets on a business trip to Copenhagen—if not on a literal plot level, then on a level of mystical significance which Alan himself is at a loss to explain fully.

Including these early childhood scenes would have made Hessler's film too long; also, without Adams' first person literary device, it would have been difficult to convey their full significance cinematically. In their place, Hessler substitutes a brief opening scene of Alan, as an adult, being haunted by a ghostly female voice, which leads him to a swing rocking by itself. The sequence sets up a tone of supernatural mystery which colors the audience's perception of the rest of the film and also ties in with Hessler's ending, another minor departure from Adams' book. Hessler's denouement has Alan return to the swing seen in the opening; only this time, the ghost rocking it is visible. Adams' book ends with a chapter in which Alan philosophizes at length on the tragedy that has befallen him and how he knows in his heart that he has had his last brush with the supernatural.

Once Alan and Karin marry and settle in England, Hessler deftly begins to insert the element

of the supernatural into the story: a stuffed toy which briefly appears from nowhere, a child's voice crying over the telephone. Summarized at length, as in the video, the explanation for Karin's haunting is plainly obvious, but in Hessler's original film the details are revealed so carefully that the audience remains tantalizingly perplexed throughout.

Eventually, after an eerie night spent in a grand English manor seemingly besieged by a ghostly presence (effectively suggested by Hessler with little more than sound effects and rustling tree branches), Alan comes to realize Karin's guilty secret—and his own guilt as well. Hers may have been the hand responsible for the deed which provoked the film's supernatural vengeance, but its tragedy is the result of his wish being carried out.

Made on an obviously low budget, *THE GIRL IN A SWING* nonetheless has a sumptuous look thanks to its location shooting in Copenhagen, England, and Florida. Tilly's haunted girl doesn't resemble the character described in Adams' book, but she captures the story's tragic Lady Macbeth qualities perhaps much better than a more glamorous actress might. Frazer easily inhabits his role, portraying not only the calm surface but suggesting a turbulent inner life as well. Both capture an understated verisimilitude which prevents the film's erotic couplings from ever being merely titillating. And Hessler conveys the eroticism in an unapologetically straightforward manner, making it an integral part of the story rather than a lurid accessory. Hessler's pacing early on is slow but makes effectual his gradual introduction of the supernatural.

Though the lyrical quality of Adams' book is hard to capture, Hessler succeeds in dramatizing its most important element. What makes *THE GIRL IN A SWING* work is that it ties the supernatural to a story which relates to us on some realistic level. Very few of us have been haunted by ghosts, but many of us have been haunted by guilt in one form or another. Relying on drama rather than shock, this is a ghost story in which the story is every bit as important as the ghost. □

Richard Adams' *The Girl In A Swing: The Director's Cut*

By Steve Biodrowski

Gordon Hessler, who adapted Richard Adams' book *The Girl in a Swing* to the screen, directed a number of stylish horror-fantasy films in the late '60s and '70s, including one of Vincent Price's better late A.I.P. efforts *SCREAM AND SLEEP AGAIN* (1970). Hessler first heard about the project while in Yugoslavia directing David Carradine and Oliver Reed in *THE MISFIT BRIGADE* for producer Just Betzer (*BABETTE'S FEAST*). Betzer owned the rights to Adams' novel and offered it to Hessler, who agreed not only to direct but decided to write the screenplay as well.

"It's a fantastic book," said Hessler, who abandoned an existing script because it wasn't faithful to Adams. "I wanted to follow the book as closely as possible. The problem with many adaptations is that the screenwriter tries to put in his own ideas and destroys the integrity of what was done by the original author."

Hessler's film is an amazingly faithful condensation, following Adams' book almost scene for scene, a fact which pleased Adams, who had been disappointed with previous adaptations of his work. "Although Adams was not in any way involved in the picture, I wanted him to read it and feel that he was comfortable with it," said Hessler. "He's like a schoolmaster—an absolutely brilliant character, and a lot of fun, very erudite. He read it and suggested changes. He argued quite a bit about the ending, but he gave it his blessing. He felt the film should just end on the porcelain figure of 'The Girl in a Swing.' I gave it a slight uplift at the end. The book dwells a great deal on the tragedy of death; it has a whole chapter that goes into great depth about what happened later. That was almost another film. Certainly, we didn't have the time to dwell upon that. Adams is a poet—he can."

Meg Tilly was cast in the pivotal role of the girl of the title through a lucky coincidence: she and Hessler have the same agent. Originally, Hessler had planned to cast an unknown who physically resembled the character as described in the book. "That worried Tilly—that she didn't have the body—but it isn't really about a body," said Hessler. "It's about a



very much devoted to the picture." Hessler reluctantly made the trims necessary to satisfy J&M. "Obviously, Adams was unhappy with the cuts," said Hessler. "And so was I, because I thought the film needed that lyrical length."

One change requested by J&M was that the ending spell out explicitly Tilly's guilty secret, whereas the book gave only a subtle implication; ironically enough, Adams himself had originally spelled out the truth himself but had been asked by his publisher to tone it down. "My original version was not explicit; it was suggested, more like the book," said Hessler. "There had always been criticism that some people wouldn't understand. I thought it was rather tiresome to do it so explicitly, but they insisted, so we had to redo Alan's voiceover. Look, if you didn't completely get it, it didn't really matter. It's something left for discussion when everyone's left the screening room."

Despite the requested changes, Hessler managed to bring in a compromise version generally acceptable to everyone. However, when the film was picked up for American distribution by Miramax, the company sent Hessler a list of eight scenes they wanted to remove. "I sent a twenty-page memo to try to show them why the scenes should be kept in, but nobody followed my recommendation," said Hessler. "The film was cut, and the version released in the cinema is not the version that I made. I haven't even gone to see it. They really destroyed the integrity of the picture."

Most of the Miramax cuts remove brief scenes and bits of dialogue that help foreshadow later events. Most damaging was the removal of Hessler's opening sequence of Alan, the film's protagonist, as he follows an unseen girl's voice to the swing, setting up the tale of his supernat-



Tilly as Adams' luminous but tragic heroine on her Florida honeymoon.

Tilly's climactic ghostly apparition, a subtle moment spoiled by distributor tampering. Left: This priceless figure foreshadows Hessler's denouement.



tion, there was one scene which required an explicit image: the protagonist's glimpse of the rotted corpse of a child, presumably the ghost plaguing Tilly, rising from the ocean. Noted Hessler, "I had originally wanted to do the shot with a dwarf, using tremendous prosthetics, and having the body pass the characters physically in the water, with the tide. The complications of that! In Denmark, the water's freezing—you couldn't put the actors in for more than thirty seconds without them turning blue! Then there were no waves. On these low-budget films, you can't wait like David Lean for three months for the right storm to come in; you just shoot what you can and move on. A lot of it is luck." Hessler said his suggestions for realizing the shot in post-production were ignored after he left the project.

Adams was flown to Denmark to view Hessler's cut—which, unfortunately, was deemed too long by the film's foreign distributor J&M Entertainment. "Adams loved it," said Hessler. "He was

quality of female-hood. There was another girl involved who was supposed to be an extraordinary up-and-coming talent. Through luck more than judgement, we got Meg. It was an incredible choice. She's an extraordinary actress; she cannot do anything that is untruthful.

"She was marvelous," Hessler said of Tilly's work in the film. "Once an actress is a true artist—which she is—the idea of whether she's naked or not is unimportant. She *hated* doing those [nude] scenes; she was nervous with all those people around; but she knew it was a film about eroticism, and once she committed, she went all the way."

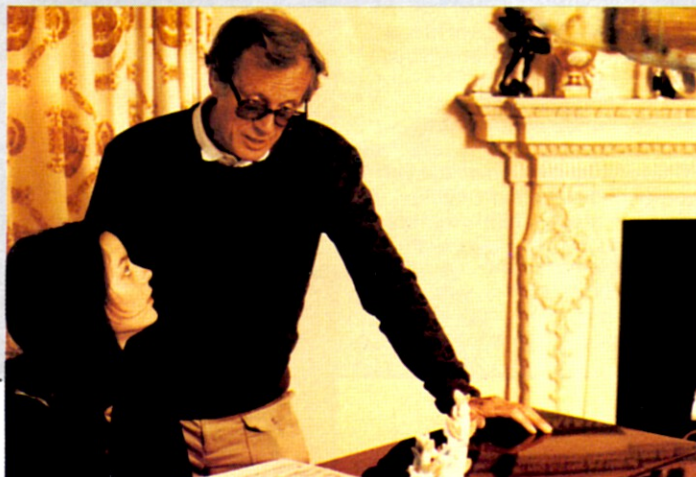
The film shot for eight weeks, plus travel time, on location in Denmark, England, and Florida. For budgetary reasons, many of the interiors were shot in Denmark; in fact, even the brief Florida sequence was to be shot there, but producer Betzer sprang for the extra money to shoot in Florida when he saw how well the production was going. "Everybody got underpaid," said Hessler. "Tilly did it for much less money than she would normally, and I did it for practically no money at all."

Unfortunately, the film's low budget betrays itself at a climactic moment. Although, for most of its length the film is a textbook example of the power of sugges-

ural beguilement. Tilly reportedly refused to help promote the film, because of Miramax's cuts. Hessler suggested that the missing footage be restored for the film's video release, which could have been promoted as the "uncut version." Instead, on video, the film only suffered further indignity: unnecessary voiceover narration by Rupert Frazer as Alan is awkwardly inserted at various points to explain the plot. The expository tone of the new voiceovers, aimed directly at the audience, jars badly with the brief narration remaining from the theatrical version, which consists of the character's thoughts to himself. Even worse, the new narration prematurely reveals the entire mystery a full ten minutes before the film's conclusion!

Despite his many efforts in the fantasy genre—including future projects like H. Rider Haggard's *AYESHA*, and *THE MUMMY LIVES*, to star Anthony Perkins—Hessler expressed no particular interest or belief in the supernatural. "I'm always astounded when I go into a party and a perfectly intelligent, normal human being is talking about a seance or some telepathy thing, which is very much in vogue in the Hollywood world," he said, adding that such material becomes effective on-screen because "People are very conscious of the supernatural—they've got an inherent fear of the unknown." □

Hessler directs Tilly in a subtle tale of the supernatural worthy of Val Lewton.





Director Stephen Sayadian on DR. CALIGARI, Updating an Expressionist Classic

By Gary Kimber

The mind-bending imagery of DR. CALIGARI is the work of director Stephen Sayadian, who previously directed the X-rated CAFE FLESH under the pseudonym of Rinse Dream. As a print art director, Sayadian said he worked on the campaigns for such films as DRESSED TO KILL, ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK and THE FOG, and as a staffer for Larry Flynt's skin magazine *Chic*.

Producer Gerald Steiner came

The Sayadian touch, bizarre imagery with the print advertising polish of a Madison Avenue media campaign.

to Sayadian with the idea to do a modern update of director Robert Weine's 1919 German classic because he had seen Sayadian's use of unusual camera angles in a film called NURSERY CRIMES. "Steiner realized THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI was in public domain," said Sayadian. "He asked me if I could do something with it. I liked the idea of shooting just interiors, the expressionism, the stylized acting but not just to repeat the story. I wanted to update it with an S&M dominating woman in charge. The idea was to capture the spirit of the original but not to use a little old man. I wanted an intense female instead."

Steiner, the owner of a successful video company, used the film as his *entre* into production, and Sayadian credited the producer for his solid financial, if not artistic, support. "I have a feeling this is not a film he understands or expected when he hired me for his first film," said Sayadian. "Perhaps he would have been happier with a traditional FRIDAY THE 13TH type slasher that exploited the Caligari name. What I gave him is a picture hopefully as outrageous, demented and strange as the original. He would have been more comfortable with a nice, safe little horror film."

Sayadian said he aimed the film squarely at the midnight cult-movie audience. "They have very little to look at," noted Sayadian. "There's Troma, slasher movies and others that try to be cult favorites but just don't cut it." But like most specialists in the world

of film, Sayadian would not be averse to giving up "a little of the outrageousness to reach a larger audience."

Sayadian shot the film in twenty days in 1988, using only interiors. "It was shot during the writer's strike when everyone was out of work," said Sayadian. "Every camera and soundhouse in Los Angeles was practically giving us the equipment because the production just wasn't there. We had crane shots and steadicam shots, stuff you don't see in a little movie made for well under a half million dollars. We took advantage of the logistics of the strike. That's why certain technical aspects of it look so spectacular."

Madelaine Reynal, a print model from Argentina, makes her film debut as Dr. Caligari, the granddaughter of the silent film character, who also runs an insane asylum. "She was incredibly graceful," said Sayadian, who

wanted a presence like Barbara Steele or Grace Jones for the part, both out of his budget league. "Reynal's body English was just beautiful. An important consideration for me was that the movement of every actor had to be synchronized with the dialogue. The actors had to know how to perform in a very self-aware, artificial style."

One notable special effect was supplied by makeup artist Ken Diaz (FRIGHT NIGHT). "He was used to working with larger budgets and was nearly overwhelmed by the lack of money and time," said Sayadian. "The main effect is of a door seen by a hallucinating patient to come to life. It licks actress Laura Albert profusely, with open wounds spewing out pills. It's nothing but a big slab of decaying flesh. I collect old medical journals, penicillin, as a hobby. In one book it's nothing but venereal diseases.

Laura Albert and an asylum door that comes to life, effect designed by Ken Diaz.



An unclassifiably surreal, incredible head trip

DR. CALIGARI

A Steiner Films Release, 4/90, 80 mins. In color. Directed by Stephen Sayadian. Executive producer, Gerald M. Steiner. Producer, Joseph F. Robertson. Director of photography, Ladi von Janski. Editor, G. Martin Steiner. Production designer, Stephen Sayadian. Special makeup effects, Ken Diaz. Costumes, Belinda Williams-Sayadian. Music, Mitchell Froom. Screenplay by Jerry Stahl and Stephen Sayadian.

Dr. Caligari	.....	Madeleine Reynal
Dr. Avol	.....	Fox Harris
Mrs. Van Houten	.....	Laura Albert
Ramona Lodger	.....	Jennifer Balgobin
Gus Pratt	.....	John Durbin
Mr. Van Houten	.....	Gene Zerna
Dr. Lodger	.....	David Parry

by Paul T. Riddell

To the list of surreally unclassifiable head trips, including ERASERHEAD, LIQUID SKY, and TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL, add DR. CALIGARI, ably defining new limits for the possibilities of film.

Director Stephen Sayadian (CAFE FLESH) goes full-out to make the film an incredible ocular experience. Nearly everything in Sayadian's world is a neon color, from costumes to doorways, all fashioned with a warped, unsettling geometry. Sayadian's imagery echoes the look of other genre auteurs like David Cronenberg, with VIDEODROME, a clear inspiration for the film's doorway of diseased skin, complete with sores that ooze multicolored pus, Sayadian's spare but imaginative sets offer a minimalistic perversity akin to Tim Burton's BEETLEJUICE, but crossed with a distinctly Cronenbergian fleshy perversity with green slime amid the gigantic artificial blooms of stage-bound "outdoor shots."

Sayadian skillfully blends cinema and performance art techniques into an appealing *melange* that makes DR. CALIGARI work in the carefully choreographed, schizophrenic performances drawn from his actors. Characters not only treat their weird milieu as perfectly normal, they stare directly at the camera while spouting scripter Jerry Stahl and Sayadian's incredibly inane dialogue.

Everything is designed for sick laughs. The gate to "Caligari's Asylum" is emblazoned with art deco letters, with an accompanying sign reading "Better Living Through Chemistry." Laura Albert plays a nymphomaniac committed to the asylum and treated by Madeleine Reynal as the titular doctor, the granddaughter of the character in the 1919 CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI, director Robert



"We're not in Kansas anymore!"—the scarecrow delusion of Caligari's patient.

Weine's classic of German expressionism that served as Sayadian's inspiration.

Caligari uses Albert as a guinea pig for her experiments, injecting fluid from the hypothalamus gland to change her behavior. Albert switches personalities with a cannibal, played by John Durbin with non-stop patter and a desire for the thrill of shock treatment ("Just give me a little tingle," he asks Caligari with a giggle). Caligari eventually runs afoul of the asylum director, played by Fox Harris (REPO MAN), and

his head nurse daughter, played by Jennifer Balgobin. David Parry plays Dr. Lodger, Balgobin's husband, who has the habit of finishing his daughter's sentences. In the end, Caligari and Albert exchange roles as patient and doctor.

While definitely not for the deficient in imagination or for those who demand logic in their films, DR. CALIGARI offers laughs for the sick at heart and a treat for moviegoers bored by the offerings at their local cinema cineplex. Ain't weirdness grand? □



Left: Laura Albert suffers a paranoid delusion while watching TV in her own living room. Above: Albert's view of a therapy session conducted by Caligari (Madeleine Reynal). Below: Sayadian, directing the action like a Mad Hatter.



I gave it to Diaz and told him to make it look like that. The movie is so pop art we didn't want slime or gory stuff so Ken added some pink Pepto Bismal, gumballs and gumdrops. The actress must have enjoyed it because when I yelled cut, she kept on with it. Must have been a personal fantasy of hers."

Future projects for Sayadian include JACKIE OH, based on a stage play he directed, about Peeping Toms. Sayadian is also seeking backing for HORMONE ALLEY, about the thriving black market in Los Angeles' back alley sex change operations, breast implants and estrogen therapy. "It's where men go to become women when they lack the finances to have it done professionally," said Sayadian. "They shoot themselves up with estrogen, developing grotesque breasts and out of control cheekbones. It's a little corner of mutants all living in one hotel. I find it really fascinating." □

FILM RATINGS

BLADES

Directed by Thomas R. Rondinella. Cinema/Troma, 10/90, 98 mins. With: Robert North, Jeremy Whelan, Victoria Scott, Holly Stevenson.

A washout as a horror film, this is nevertheless an amusingly done parody of JAWS set on a golf course, with a renegade lawnmower as the predatory shark. Writers William R. Pace and Thomas R. Rondinella manage to include a surprising number of on-target parallels for such an unlikely setting, in the process parodying moments from other films, such as APOCALYPSE NOW, PATTON, and that baby carriage scene from POTEMKIN, this time with a golf cart.

Lead Robert North is totally wooden in his role as a burnt out golf pro, but the very unchangingness of his expression is funny in itself. Jeremy Whelan comes off better in the Robert Shaw role and has a wonderful death scene with great prosthetics by Vincent Guastini. Although it's faint praise to say this is one of the best films Troma ever produced (made in 1988), it's worth renting, and director/co-writer Rondinella may turn out to be a talent to watch.

•• Judith P. Harris

DARK SHADOWS

Directed by Dan Curtis. NBC-TV series. 1/91, 60 mins. With: Ben Cross, Barbara Steele, Roy Thinnes, Jean Simmons.

Producer/director Dan Curtis' vampire soap opera was hardly original material to begin with. It comes off as old

A victim of the space devil in DARK SIDE OF THE MOON.



Tierney, Johnson and Roncetti in DRACULA—THE SERIES.

hat to see it dusted off and recast as a prime-time series, which began with two two-hour installments. The 90s version has little to recommend it over the original. The only obvious improvement is Joanna Going as governess Victoria Winters, more fetching than the lumpen, humorless Alexandra Moltke. Ben Cross fails to convey the tortured guilt and frustration of vampire Barnabas, evoked so ably by the original's Jonathan Frid. Makes one long for the inadvertent hilarity of the old show's live-on-camera technical gaffes.

•• Judith P. Harris

DARKSIDE OF THE MOON

Directed by D.J. Webster. Vidmark Video, 7/90, 90 mins. With: Bill Bledsoe, Alan Blumenfeld, John Diehl, Robert Sampson.

A dumb variation on the Bermuda Triangle theme, suffering from post-ALIEN overkill. The crew of SpaceCore One, out to repair nuclear laden satellites, find themselves trapped and floating towards the dark side of the moon in the year 2022. A space shuttle lost 30 years earlier in the Bermuda Triangle mysteriously appears with a horrifying, deadly occupant—no less than the Devil himself! Though a technically competent thriller, the film focuses too much time on crew members running around dim, deserted corridors. The slow pace and lack of dramatic or effects set pieces prevents this direct-to-video release from being any more than of passing interest.

• Dan Scapperotti

DRACULA THE SERIES

Directed by Alan Eastman. Universal Syndicated series, 9/90, 30 mins. With: Geordi Johnson, Jacob Tierney, Joe Roncetti.

A recent newspaper article on new ways to program VCRs claimed that, with cable, network, and syndication, there is an average of 7000 hours of TV to choose from each week. Unfortunately, the great majority of those 7000 hours is completely unwatchable junk like this series Universal chose to launch its fifth network (*a la* Fox TV).

This bloodless vampire series is a belated reworking of THE LOST BOYS, with a hip, modern Dracula and a couple of precocious kids repetitively chasing each other week after week. Set in an unnamed European country, the boys live with their uncle (Bernard Behrens), the great grandson of Professor Van Helsing. A nearby neighbor is A. Lucard (Geordi Johnson), international millionaire businessman, cast against type as a blonde Dracula. The two boys easily elude the vampires, thanks to the crosses and the holy water they happen to have with them. Acting by everyone, except Behrens, is pathetic, and special effects of the vampires turning into bats are cartoony.

• Judith P. Harris

THE FORGOTTEN ONE

Directed by Phillip Badger. Academy Entertainment, 10/90, 98 mins. With: Terry O'Quinn, Blair Parker, Kristy McNichol.

A very fine ghost story, stylishly shot and well-acted. Terry O'Quinn of THE STEP-FATHER is a writer who falls in love with a beautiful ghost (Blair Parker). The only trouble is, she wants him to become a ghost too! Keeps audiences guessing all the way, moving from a supernatural mystery to a romance to conventional horror. Kristy McNichol is O'Quinn's neighbor who tries

to save him from the amorous spirit. Witty, suspenseful, and it doesn't cop out at the end. O'Quinn is especially good as the normal guy pursued by a sexy but murderous ghost. Extremely entertaining.

•• David Wilt

GRIM PRAIRIE TALES

Directed by Wayne Coe. East West Film Partners, 9/90, 90 mins. With: James Earl Jones, Brad Dourif.

One of the more intriguing entries in the recent mini-boom of anthology films is a noble effort, but doesn't quite live up to the full potential of its premise. The framing device—two travelers while away a prairie night telling stories—begins to look more and more like writer/director Wayne Coe's in-joke on the conflict between those who make movies and those who get paid to watch them ("It's a story," cries Jones' bounty hunter as city-slicker Dourif tries to deconstruct one tale, "You tell it and there it is!"). The stories themselves—all tasting of the southwest, complete with hired guns and lynch mobs, frontier justice and Indian burial grounds—begin promisingly, but are so cursorily handled that in the end they fail to, as Jones so aptly put it, "stick to you like an eyeball to a cactus needle." Best of the lot: a (literally!) wickedly conceived tale about a traveler who encounters a pregnant woman in the middle of the prairie. Greatest disappointment: a non-genre lynch mob story where the ultimate "horror" is the revelation of how blind love can actually be.

•• Daniel Persons

HYPERSPACE

Directed by Tod Durham. Regency Prods., 10/87, 90 mins. With: Alan Marx, Paula Poundstone, Chris Elliot.

Like a throwback to the

early days of A.I.P., the title and posters for this 3-D Earl Owensby production promise a film different from the one you actually see in the theatre. Instead of a special effects-filled parody of STAR WARS, you get a Darth Vader look-alike chasing some North Carolina yokels mistaken for the leaders of a space rebellion. Meanwhile, Chris Elliot (of Fox TV's GET A LIFE) collects a paycheck by doing an imitation of Richard Dreyfus in JAWS. Special effects of the alien ship taking off at the conclusion are fine; otherwise, the film is entirely earthbound, featuring only a few laser beams and some horrendous matte lines during a chase scene with flying shopping carts.

• Steve Biodrowski

THE ICICLE THIEF

Directed by Maurizio Nichetti. Aries, 8/90. In color and black & white. With: Maurizio Nichetti, Caterina Sylos Labini, Federico Rizzo, Heidi Komarek.

Director Maurizio Nichetti, who made the 1982 science fiction spoof TOMORROW WE DANCE, returns with this blending of fantasy and reality. The film is a protest against the way commercial interruptions alter films. While a pseudo-neorealist film unfolds on television, bits of the commercials start to pop up in the storyline until a model from a commercial alters the story drastically. The film's director then enters the film to try to bring it back on course while the families who are watching everything but see nothing fail to notice the difference. There are some witty ideas here, but this is one comedy which simply doesn't amuse. Keaton, Tati, and Woody Allen have all done this kind of thing far better. Filmed in black and white and color.

• Dennis Fischer

Simmons, Steele and Cross in the revival of DARK SHADOWS.



FILM RATINGS

SHE'S BACK

Directed by Tim Kinceid. Cinemas, 10/90, 89 mins. With: Carrie Fischer, Robert Joy, Matthew Cowles, Donna Drake.

An unfunny comedy about a Queens housewife (Carrie Fischer) who is murdered by a gang when her house is robbed the night she and her hen-pecked wimp of a husband (Robert Joy) move in. When the police have no leads after six weeks, Fischer returns to haunt Joy, continually nagging him until he agrees to hunt down the gang and kill them one by one. Each character is more unpleasant than the next, except for Joy's nutty next door neighbor (Matthew Cowles), who works at the city dump and who lives and breathes trash, providing a loony Ed Norton-ish charm that is a welcome relief from the film's mean-spiritedness. A dull effort, made in 1988 as *DEAD AND MARRIED*, and written by Buddy Giovannazzo, the director of Troma's hard-hitting low-budget gem *COMBAT SHOCK*.

o Judith Harris

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

Directed by Jonathan Demme. Orion, 2/91, 118 mins. With: Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, Scott Glenn.

The strongest psycho thriller in years earns Roger Corman protege Jonathan Demme his stripes as a top flight director. For once, a bestseller comes to the screen with every ounce of disturbing brutality and chilling menace intact. Thank scripter Ted Tally for a brilliant no-holds-barred adaptation of Thomas Harris' companion piece to "Red Dragon"—filmed by Michael Mann as *MANHUNTER*. Eschewing Mann's splatterchic approach, Demme focuses on stunning performances and hard-hitting adult themes with shattering psychological impact.

F.B.I recruit Jodie Foster tracks down a transsexual serial killer with the aid of imprisoned psychopath Anthony Hopkins who forces her to confront her own haunted past in the sick process. Instantly gripping, powerful and uncompromising, the hair-raising dialogue alone causes spine tingles. While it's hard to forget *MANHUNTER*'s Brian Cox as Dr. Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lektor, Hopkins reinvents the warped genius role and makes it his own with a wide-eyed, manic portrayal of sheer blood-freezing evil. He deserves an Oscar. And so does Demme with this flawless masterwork guaranteed to reduce audiences to quivering wrecks. An absolute must-see.

o o o o Alan Jones

FILM TITLE	●●●			●●●		●●		●		○		
	MUST SEE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	MEDIOCRE	POOR	VJB	FSC	DG	JPH	AJ	BK	DS
ALICE /Woody Allen Orion, 12/90, 106 mins.			●●●					●	●●		●●	●●
ALMOST AN ANGEL /John Cornell Paramount, 12/90, 97 mins.			●	●	●					○		
CHILD'S PLAY II /John Lafia Universal, 11/90, 85 mins.			●	●				●	○		●	
DARK SHADOWS /Dan Curtis NBC-TV, 1/91, 240 mins.			●●	●				●●			○	●●
DREAMS /Akira Kurosawa Warner Bros, 9/90, 120 mins.			●●	●				●			●●	●●
EDWARD SCISSORHANDS /Tim Burton Fox, 12/90, 98 mins.			●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●	●●●●	●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
EVE OF DESTRUCTION /Duncan Gibbins Orion, 1/91.			●	●	○			○			●	
THE FLASH /Gail Morgan Hickman CBS-TV, weekly series, 30 mins.			●●	●●				○	●●		●	●●
FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND /Roger Corman Fox, 11/90, 85 mins.			●●	●●●				●	●		●	
GHOST /Jerry Zucker Paramount, 7/90, 127 mins.			●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
GRAVEYARD SHIFT /Ralph S. Singleton Paramount, 10/90, 87 mins.			●●	○	○		○				●	
HARDWARE /Richard Stanley Miramax, 9/90, 92 mins.			●●	●●●●	●●		○	●●	●●	●●	●	●
JACOB'S LADDER /Adrian Lyne Tri-Star, 11/90, 117 mins.			●●	●●	●		○	○	○	●	●	●
LOOK WHO'S TALKING TOO /Amy Heckerling Tri-Star, 12/90, 81 mins.			○	●	○				○	○		
MEET THE APPLIGATES /Michael Lehmann New World, 1/91, 82 mins.			●●●		●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
MISERY /Rob Reiner Columbia, 11/90, 107 mins.			●●●	●●●●	●	●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD /Tom Savini Columbia, 10/90, 89 mins.			●	●●●●	●	●●●					●	●●
PACIFIC HEIGHTS /John Schlesinger Fox, 9/90, 107 mins.			●●●	●●	●●				○	●	●	●●●
POPCORN /Alan Ornsby Movie Partners, 2/91, mins.			●		○							
PREDATOR 2 /Stephen Hopkins Fox, 11/90, 108 mins.			●●	●●●	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	●●●
THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER /Disney 11/90, 110 mins.			●●	●●	●●	●●	●●				●	●●
ROBOT JOX /Stuart Gordon Triumph, 11/90, 84 mins.			●	●	○	○					●	●●
STEEL AND LACE /Ernest Farino Fries, 11/90, 90 mins.					○						●	
TWO EVIL EYES /Romero & Argento Taurus, 10/90, 105 mins.									●●	●●		
WARLOCK /Steve Miner Triumph, 2/91, 102 mins.									●●	●●	●	●●
THE WITCHES /Nicholas Roeg Warner Bros, 8/90, 95 mins.			●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●

VJB/Vincent J. Bossone FSC/Frederick S. Clarke DG/Dann Gire JPH/Judith P. Harris
AJ/Alan Jones BK/Bill Kelley DS/Dan Scapperotti

SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT 4: THE INITIATION

Directed by Brian Yuzna. Live Home Video, 12/90, 85 mins. With: Maud Adams, Neith Hunter, Tommy Hinkley.

A female reporter investigating a death by "spontaneous combustion" becomes involved with a cult of mystic feminists led by Maud Adams. Some really disgusting special effects involving slimy, oversized insect larvae (courtesy of Screaming Mad George) are the highlights of this bizarre and confusing feature, directed by Brian Yuzna, the producer of Stuart Gordon's *RE-ANIMATOR*. The film is not dull, but fails to be really entertain-

ing despite—or possibly because of—the constant action and the hallucinatory atmosphere. The only connection with the previous films in this heretofore Santa Claus slasher series is the very tenuous Christmas setting.

o David Wilt

THEY CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

Directed by Sidney Hayes. Universal TV, 10/90, 60 mins. With: Dean Cameron, Stuart Fratkin, Allan Royal.

Recycled claptrap stolen from more sources than there's room to name, by writers including Tom McLoughlin, Peter Baloff and Dave Wollert. When was the last time you

saw—a funny alien who could point his finger and do an amazing thing?—a funny alien who was extremely knowledgeable about some Earth customs but extremely dense about others, such as attracting a girl by performing a wolf whistle?—policemen and Feds who were even dumber than the funny aliens they are chasing?—a whole bunch of car chases?

If you are extremely young and have never seen any of the above before, or don't mind spending an hour a week with a bunch of characters who are all less intelligent than you, then perhaps this syndicated TV series will appeal to you—unless

you happen to notice it's not really very funny either.

o Judith Harris

TWILIGHT OF THE COCKROACHES

Directed by Hiroaki Yoshida. Streamline Pictures, 9/87, 105 mins. With: Kaoru Kubayashi, Setsuko Karasumaru.

Now making the festival rounds, this apocalyptic fable is a daring change for Japanese animation, and one of the most imaginatively mature genre films in years. Human-like bugs make themselves at home in a bachelor's pad, holding leftover galas using his video cameras for cross-race talk shows. Dissatisfied with this plastic existence, six-legged Naomi braves a talking turd and a rainstorm to pursue a handsome cockroach across "the valley." There she finds a tribe in fear of the bachelor's girl, who massacres the insects as they dive-bomb for food. When the primates discover romance, all hell breaks loose as the arthropods unite for a tragic assault on the vicious couple.

Using a surreal mix of cartooning and live-action, director Hiroaki Yoshida shoots from the floor to turn humans into fearsome giants, mirroring their love story with Naomi's divided affection for her simple mate and the military hero. For guidance, she prays to a toy cat in the backyard. Hauntingly poetic and unexpectedly moving, this brilliant film will make one think twice before stomping on one of the critters.

o o o o Daniel Schweiger

WHAT A DUMMY

Directed by Scott Redman. Syndicated TV series, 9/90, 30 mins. With: Stephen Dorff, Joshua Rudoy, David Doty.

A syndicated sitcom about a typical TV family with irritating children who inherit a ventriloquist dummy from a great uncle they've never met. The dummy, named Buzz, can talk by itself but not walk or gesture. A part of the uncle's vaudeville act, Buzz is a font of old, bad jokes and hokey schtick and is one of the major reasons not to tune in again. The puppet is courtesy of *TREMORS* wizards Alec Gillis and Tom Woodruff Jr., with the kind of facial and lip movement seen in *CHILD'S PLAY*'s Chucky. Recreating the premise of *ALF*, the family convinces Buzz he has to clam up in the presence of non-family members (such as wildly over-acting neighbor Kay Ballard) or else at the least he'll lose his privacy, and at the worst, the government will take him away and dismember him. We can only hope. o Judith P. Harris

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TERMINATOR 2

continued from page 11

the production revealed that Cameron was already \$5 million over the film's original \$65 million budget after just the first five weeks of shooting, prompting executives at Carolco to hit the panic button. *Variety* speculated that Carolco is having difficulty covering the film's costs with foreign presales, as has been their habit with runaway productions in the past like last year's **TOTAL RECALL**.

But whatever the financial *Sturm und Drang* taking place behind the scenes, Biehn, who also worked for Cameron as the star of **ALIENS**, predicts that **TERMINATOR 2** will be a treat for audiences. "It's going to be a brilliant movie," said Biehn. "It will play like **ALIENS** played to **ALIEN**—it's a roller coaster ride, more and better, with some \$60 or \$70 million invested in it. Of course much of that went into the pockets of Arnold [Schwarzenegger] and Jim [Cameron] himself. But there's still some \$40 million that will find its way onto the screen." □

ROBOCOP III

continued from page 38

have if we had paid [Weller] to play the part. Also, it was our decision that to go with another name actor would color one's perception of the character—you wouldn't think of the character as RoboCop anymore, or Murphy; you'd think of it as actor X suddenly playing Murphy. So we wanted an unknown, and it just so happened that it's better for our budget, because we could save the money and put it into the effects and other things.

"We saw [Burke] in a little, independent picture called **UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH**. He was a very strong male lead in that movie—kind of a cross between Christopher Walken and Clint Eastwood. We did a test; he came out, and we met with him and read him and we put him in the RoboCop. And it was really neat; he put on the suit, and there was RoboCop. He was it."

So far, so good. But will the public have problems accepting a new Robo? "I don't think so," said Dekker. "I think there's a real, strong precedent that people overlook. If you really think about the characters of literature that have been translated to film—take Sherlock Holmes, for example—Basil Rathbone was possibly the fifth or sixth actor to play him, and we think of him as the one-and-only. There's a kind of grand tradition of new actors taking over other roles. I think with Robert [playing RoboCop] there are certain echoes of Peter [Weller], but I

think he's also going to bring something new."

Scheduled to commence production early in February, **ROBOCOP 3** is set for a 69-day shoot, with a few days added in Los Angeles for blue-screen and pick-up shots. Release is planned for sometime early in 1992. After that, Dekker claims his work with "The Future of Law Enforcement" is over, even if the series is not: "This is my only involvement with RoboCop," he said. "The impression I get is that [Orion thinks] of this as a franchise, and they would like to keep it going, take the character in other directions. He's sort of Orion's version of James Bond." □

THE WANDERING KID

continued from page 46

prove mystifying if not downright engaging to American cinema buffs, is the sheer scope of its amoral slant on a perpetually conflicted and self-immolating universe. When's the last time you saw Heaven-sent superhuman enforcers of the *status quo* portrayed as blithe sociopaths with megaton capabilities?

There's little doubt that even hardened westerners will find **THE WANDERING KID**'s particular brand of cross-cultural genre splicing bewildering at best. American audiences unused to old Japanese animation bugaboos like limited character movement—though Takayama's state-of-the-art computer animation technique puts rotoscoping to shame—rampanant misogyny, unbelievably complex (or confusing, depending on your point of view) cosmologies, and infuriatingly open, unresolved endings, may consider Takayama a certifiable menace.

Horror buffs and animation fans, however, will probably end up grooving on Takayama's full-throttle, epic-scale erasures, mega-X sex, and the striking variations on the overripe, infernal bestiary (it's Bosch by way of Clive Barker). Besides heavies like Chojin we get: a trench-coated demon toady who can't keep his eyes in his sockets; his slime buddy who wears a **METROPOLIS** cap and uses an after-slaughter breath freshener; and a terrific, show-stopping red herring/Chojin-suspect who resembles a cross between a wolverine and one of Joe Dante's Gremlins on steroids (this guy really deserves his own *Aurora* model kit!).

Along with Takayama's "let it all hang out" gallery, the film adds to its cumulative hysteria by having the jangled couplings of ill-fated teen lovers Akemi and Nagumo precede/trigger the Lovecraftian pyrotechnics (kind

of like the *Sturm und Drang* carnality of Tobe Hooper's **LIFE-FORCE** love birds). The last portion of the film evocatively sums up Japan's Armageddon/rebirth fixations with its haunting visuals of the few surviving protagonists fighting it out over desolate, rubble-strewn, hellishly-lit landscapes.

When something so awesomely ground-breaking, and unremittingly original as **THE WANDERING KID** comes along, the temptation to toss out the usual pre-processed critical hoopla-whoops is great. But in a field too often dominated by the most shallow, comforting and sun-dappled of play-it-safe banalities, Takayama's film is a refreshingly Stygian Bronx cheer. To put it more bluntly: **WANDERING KID** is a masterpiece that bites, and anyone who doesn't have the sensibilities for it should stay the fuck away. □

SCISSORHANDS

continued from page 47

and sometimes worst emotions.

VINCENT was about a child's fascination with actor Vincent Price, to whom Burton here pays homage by casting him as Edward's twinkling "father." Like some Victorian Gepetto, the venerable horror star gives Edward birth, then teaches his charge etiquette and captivates him with poetry. The love with which Burton highlights his self-proclaimed "favorite" performer is undeniable.

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS bursts with wonderful imagery (caught by Stefan Czapsky's crispedged cinematography), from the Magritte-like hill topped by a castle that looms at the end of Main Street to the populuxe colors and streamlined planes of a suburban wonderland. Bo Welch's production design, whether '30s Universal or '50s Levittown, is marvelous throughout. Danny Elfman's rhapsodic choral score bestows sonic luminescence on everything it touches. The movie is full of renegade ideas about art, sex, and religion, and even registers the unsettling underside of Christmas' desperately enforced jollity. (Sexuality, in fact, is probably the film's single great Unspoken, with Edward's quietly menacing digits conjuring up speculation in the viewer's mind on matters like intercourse, toilet behavior, and masturbation.)

As in his previous films, Burton shows himself a visionary idea man whose chief weakness is structural, meaning that his movies only fitfully cohere and regularly find themselves stumped for satisfactory resolutions. **EDWARD SCISSORHANDS** is framed by an elegiac interlude in which Kim

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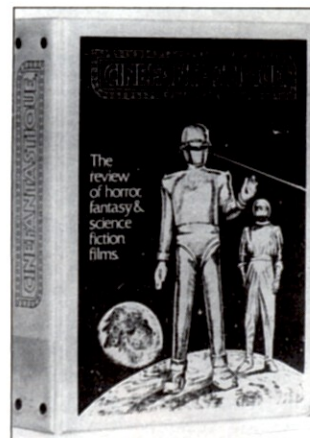
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(Winona Ryder), Edward's unrequited love grown old, explains to her granddaughter at bedtime why the snow falls. It's a Grimm-like notion redolent of THE COMPANY OF WOLVES, but Burton can't quite pull off its bittersweetness, and the end seems oddly strained as if something were missing. Edward returns to his hilltop home to turn out frenetic ice sculptures, while Kim nurses years of mournful resignation. The movie strives to poeticize their plight, but the attempt falters (perhaps because "exalted renunciation" is too alien a concept for contemporary audiences).

Nonetheless, EDWARD SCISSORHANDS is a lovely, impressively moving work that celebrates both America's ambivalent love for the "deviant" and exotic, and the director's deep commitment to his own creative instincts. □

PREDATOR 2

continued from page 48

has already authorized an *Alien v. Predator* comic book series in which a Predator teams up with a human, and the trophy case in the Predator's ship in this film clearly revealed its own tie to Fox's ALIEN series.

So, while PREDATOR 2 has its share of clunking ideas, most notably the entirely gratuitous fear of heights given Glover's Harrigan, the outrageously stereotyped character of King Willie (the Jamaican voodoo drug lord whose one ponderous scene seems in the film only to remind us that Predators and Rastafarians use the same hairdresser) and the caricatured heavy-handed Fed role given Busey and his agents, the film delivers enough action, suspense, and interesting touches to keep open the possibility of a PREDATOR 3. In fact, at film's end when Glover yells to the disappointed federal agents, "Don't worry, assholes, you'll get another chance," it's hard to keep from hoping that he's right. □

MAD, MAD MADDIN

continued from page 45

the whole of Canada. I've written the script with George [Tolles] again from the standpoint it's an opera without singing set in that most neutral country of all, Switzerland. I have a \$1.5 million budget, meaning I can sign up higher profile actors alongside my repertory actor stable. I promise you it will still have the now expected, pretty cheesy Maddin quality to it."

From Maddin's description, CAREFUL sounds like a dip into the soap opera-noir territory David Lynch explored in TWIN

PEAKS. The constant Lynch comparison is one Maddin said he's sick and tired of. "The only thing we have in common is we've both made a couple of black and white pictures," lamented Maddin. "I'm a gentle, quiet director who seeks viewer involvement. I'm working toward beauty, placidity and exquisite strangeness. I don't think that's what Lynch is about at all. His work is far more contrived than mine."

Maddin termed TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL and ARCHANGEL as "An inventory of my movie-making mistakes so far." Maddin felt his growing legion of admirers will see "a development in the direction they like" with CAREFUL. "The story is clear, yet peculiar," said Maddin. "My movies speak for themselves. I'm not a commercial film director. I have no passion for it. I couldn't make one if I tried, I'm not that versatile. I'm well aware my movies are considered strange, off-beat and uncategorizable. But I'm proud of that. So I'll keep working in the areas that interest me and, who knows, maybe one day they'll stray into the commercial arena." □

DESIGNING TURTLES II

continued from page 26

There was one more limitation, though, both admitted—time. With the unusual production schedule of two full units shooting simultaneously, more pressure was placed on the art department. "This is really a twenty-week shooting schedule with two units running nine weeks each," said Smith. "That meant ten fewer weeks allotted for set construction than would have been otherwise. Most of our work, once you've conceived it, is making it happen on schedule and on budget," said Smith, who credited "an outstanding construction department," coordinated by Jones, and Berke for his art department management.

Berke, a recent graduate of N.Y.U.'s Film Department, was recommended for TURTLES II by his friend and fellow art director Gary Wissner (TURTLES I, THE ABYSS, GRAVEYARD SHIFT), and took the opportunity to work with Smith to soak up as much experience as possible. "One of the remarkable things about Roy is that very few changes have occurred from his initial conceptions in Los Angeles," said Berke. "He was right on the money."

Smith nodded in agreement. "You don't change." Then looking up to a broken window above the pier through which Shredder has been thrown, Smith asked, "That hole, can that be wider?" □

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LETTERS

IT'S NOT MYTHICAL TO CANADIANS

Your April 1991 issue was marred by a notable (to Canadian readers, anyway) error in the **HIGHLANDER II** preview [21:5:8]. Alan Jones writes that the flick's alternative title **HIGHLANDER II: YELLOWKNIFE**, refers to "the name of a mythical Canadian frontier town." There are 10,000 Yellowknife residences who will dispute Jones' claim. Yellowknife is actually the capital city of Canada's Northwest Territories, nestled in the northwest arm of Great Slave Lake, about 1,000 kilometers north of Edmonton, Alberta.

Cinefantastique readers should also note that Yellowknife is the hometown of Margot Kidder, who played Lois Lane in the **SUPERMAN** films and also starred in director Brian DePalma's **SISTERS**.

The town was actually founded as a trading post in 1789 and became a boomtown in 1896 after gold was discovered in the area by miners on the way to the Klondike.

Ian Johnston
Halifax, Nova Scotia

DARKMAN'S MAKEUP CO-CREATOR?

In your list of **DARKMAN** credits [21:5:56] you show Scott Smith's name listed with Tony Gardner as makeup effects. I, along with Tony Gardner, created all of the effects for the film **DARKMAN**.

In your profile of Tony Gardner, nowhere did you list me as co-creator, and for the record it was not Tony Gardner's design, it was our design. I would assume that if writer Steve Biodrowski had done his homework he would have come to the same conclusion.

Please correct this information in your next issue.

Larry R. Hamlin
Sun Valley, CA 91352

[The erroneously credited Scott Smith was actually one of DARKMAN's editors, a typographic error in our credits listing. Gardner, when interviewed, did mention the co-credited Hamlin, a cousin of makeup expert Rick Baker, but referred to him as a "former" business partner who made no design contribution to the film's makeup work.]

ROBIN HOOD

continued from page 9

tion of Freeman as Robin's Saracen sidekick, Azeem. "The secret to the success of any film intended to galvanize an audience is to introduce new information," said Freeman. "The Robin Hood legend is centered around the Crusades but usually they're in the distant background. Not here. Robin saves my life and I won't leave his side until I've discharged the same obligation."

Like Costner, Freeman is doing his own stunts and has been pumping iron ever since he arrived in England. "I've always wanted to look like Arnold," he smiled. "The challenge with Azeem is to bring out the humor while saying the lines very straight. It's hard because he's more cultured and respectful than the rest of the band, a central truth about the Moorish race at the time. In the course of events, I introduce Robin to gunpowder, telescopes and even a Caesarian operation!"

The locations for **ROBIN HOOD** took the cast and crew all over Great Britain. Sherwood Forest was spread between the

New Forest and Burnam Beeches, close to the film's Shepperton home base. Robin and Azeem make a spectacular entrance back into England at Hadrian's Wall. A Yorkshire waterfall highlights Costner's body double nude scene. Hulne Priory in Northumberland became Marian's home. And London's St. Bartholemew's Church stands in Nottingham Cathedral with Carcassonne Castle in France as the city exteriors. Each location was hand-picked by Reynolds, according to Costner, who noted, "That's Reynolds' hallmark. He takes his movies to the streets, so to speak. Another director would have shot outside London for convenience. But we've been everywhere and I've never seen prettier countryside."

Said Reynolds of his passion for location work, "My icon is David Lean who told great personal stories against huge backdrops. I'm trying that combination here. I want audiences to be completely intrigued by the characters, yet take them places they've never gone before. **PRINCE OF THIEVES** won't just be two hours of mindless action." □

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CINEFANTASTIQUE BACK ISSUES



VOL 17 NO 2

This popular issue is devoted to the 20th anniversary of the STAR TREK television series. It talks to the writers of the episodes, the cameraman, producer Gene Roddenberry, and the makeup wizard who created Spock's ears and many other E.T.s. It also discusses the series in light of the sequels that followed. **\$8.00**



VOL 16 NO 4/5

In-depth 32-page retrospective on the making of Alfred Hitchcock's classic, PSYCHO, settles once and for all who directed the infamous shower scene; Also a probing report on the original TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE; David Cronenberg's THE FLY and an exhaustive retrospect of the original film. **\$13.00**



VOL 18 NO 1

The making of director Paul Verhoeven's science fiction hit ROBOCOP includes interviews with Verhoeven, makeup effects creator Rob Bottin and many others involved in the film. Also, a look at MAX HEADROOM and "cyberpunk." STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION's scripting difficulties profiled. **\$9.00**



VOL 20 NO 1/2

The record-breaking BATMAN and its director Tim Burton are the focus of this double issue. Included are profiles of those directly involved. The story behind Burton's BEETLEJUICE, crammed with photos, effects stories and a filmography of the director. Phil Alden Robinson on directing FIELD OF DREAMS. **\$30.00**



VOL 19 NO 3

This issue features STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, providing a critical overview of the first year and a look at where the second season is headed. Also, a look at the creative power structure that evolved during the show's first season and the reasons why many of the series creative personnel left. **\$8.00**



VOL 19 NO 5

The James Bond adventure LICENCE TO KILL is featured in this dynamic issue. Interviews with current 007 Timothy Dalton, director John Glen, producer Michael Wilson and many more; a nostalgic view of Bond movie posters; and a dazzling retrospect on Bond films and the characters that made them memorable. **\$8.00**



VOL 18 NO 4

Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger is the subject of this issue which profiles his film work since ALIEN and looks at the Giger rip-offs that have come in the years following ALIEN. The artist is interviewed in his studio/home in Switzerland, and speaks about his past experiences and his latest film work—THE MIRROR. **\$8.00**



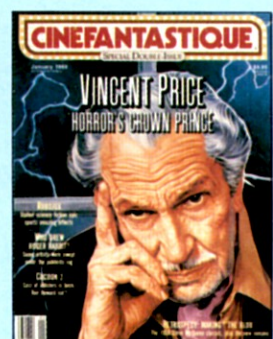
VOL 18 NO 5

The cover story features A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, including a candid interview with creator Wes Craven on why he left the popular series. And, the making of PHANTASM II, with a look back at the original. ROBOTOX, CHILD'S PLAY, SHORT CIRCUIT 2, and the remake of THE BLOB are also featured. **\$8.00**



VOL 17 NO 3/4

This special double issue is devoted to the STAR TREK movie trilogy, and follows the course charted by STAR TREK II, III, and IV. Writer/director Nicholas Meyer, and actor/director Leonard Nimoy are interviewed in-depth. We also take a look at the dynamic visual effects work of ILM in STAR TREK IV. **\$13.00**



VOL 19 NO 1/2

This double issue features a look back over the distinguished genre film career of actor Vincent Price, who has thrilled and chilled us for years. Also, a retrospect on THE BLOB (1958), with a production article on the remake; and a report of the making of A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET IV—THE DREAM MASTER. **\$13.00**



VOL 20 NO 5

The story of Paul Blaisdell, Hollywood's forgotten monster-maker who worked for independent '50s producers like Roger Corman, using his ingenuity and imagination (and little money) to create some of the best-known movie monsters. How he did it is a lesson in special effects and low-budget filmmaking. **\$8.00**



VOL 20 NO 3

TALES FROM THE CRYPT—HBO's series based on the EC horror comics of the early-'50s is the feature story. Big-name directors working on the series give their views. And the many effects are described and pictured. Other stories cover Stephen King, THE ABYSS and BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. **\$8.00**



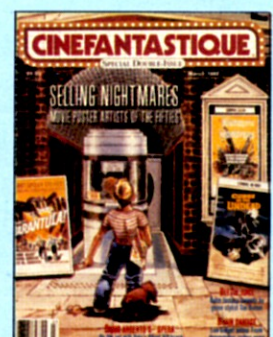
VOL 5 NO 4

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS Retrospect with comprehensive interviews; Jim Danforth on KING KONG and his resignation from the Oscar Academy; Also included is a photo report of George Lucas' STAR WARS; and a preview of Ray Harryhausen's stop motion for SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER. **\$21.00**



VOL 19 NO 4

BRAZIL director Terry Gilliam's new fantasy epic, THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN is featured. Behind-the-scenes coverage highlights interviews with Gilliam and other principals, who describe the rocky road to the film's completion and explain how the budget sky-rocketed to \$45 million. **\$8.00**



VOL 18 NO 2/3

This special double issue spotlights the "Movie Poster Artists of the Fifties" and their remarkable work. Over 60 colorful pages of art and artists themselves. Also featured is Italian auteur Dario Argento's film OPERA, and director Wes Craven's entry THE SERPENT & THE RAINBOW. **\$13.00**

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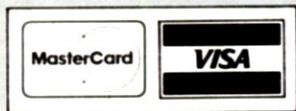
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